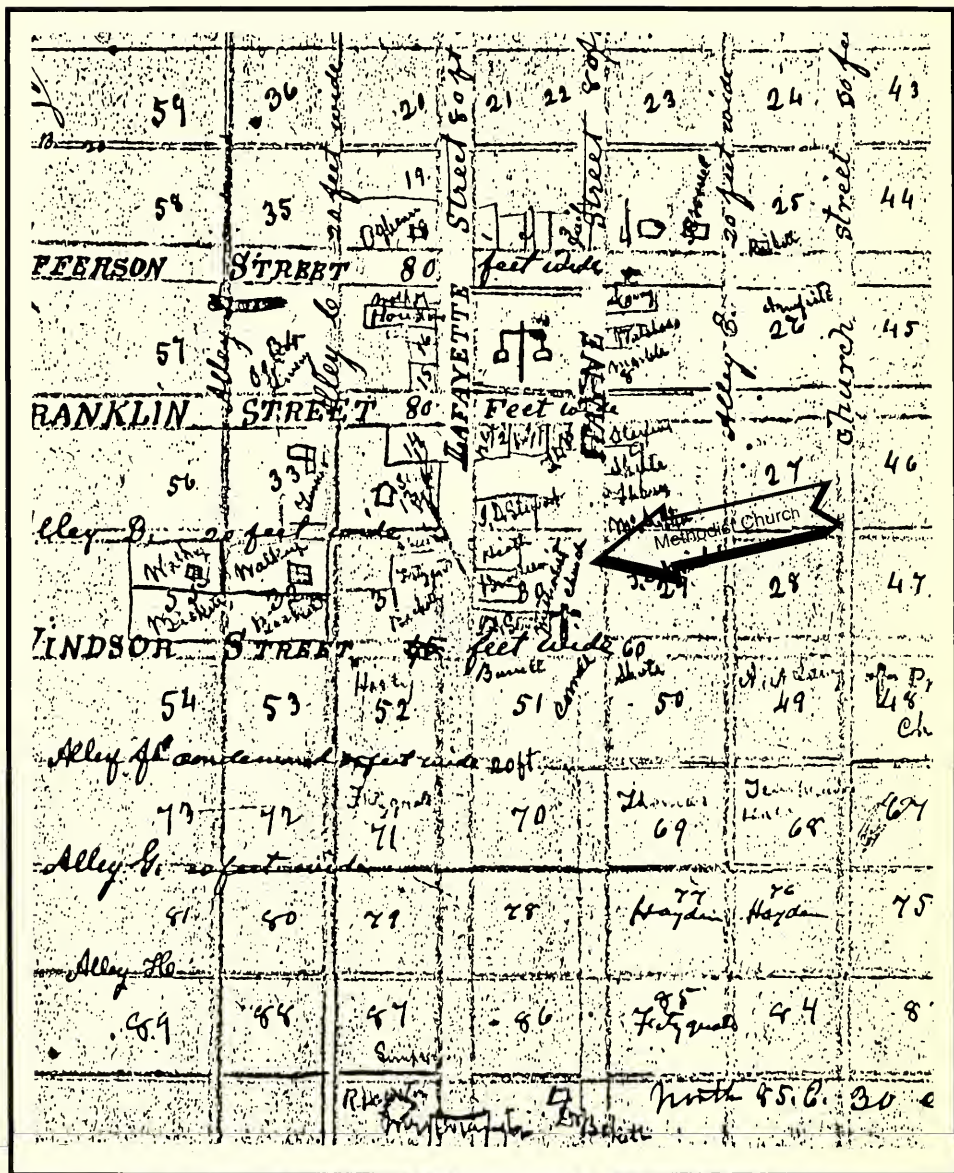


ACTS 29:
The First 150 Years
Of
Central Methodist Church



Monroe, North Carolina
1844-1994



1870's Map of Monroe

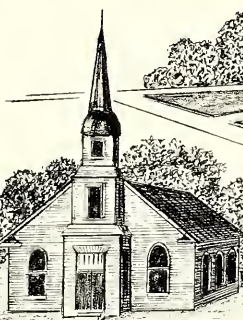
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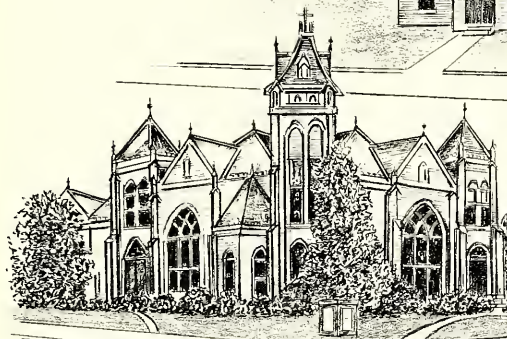
1844 — 1994



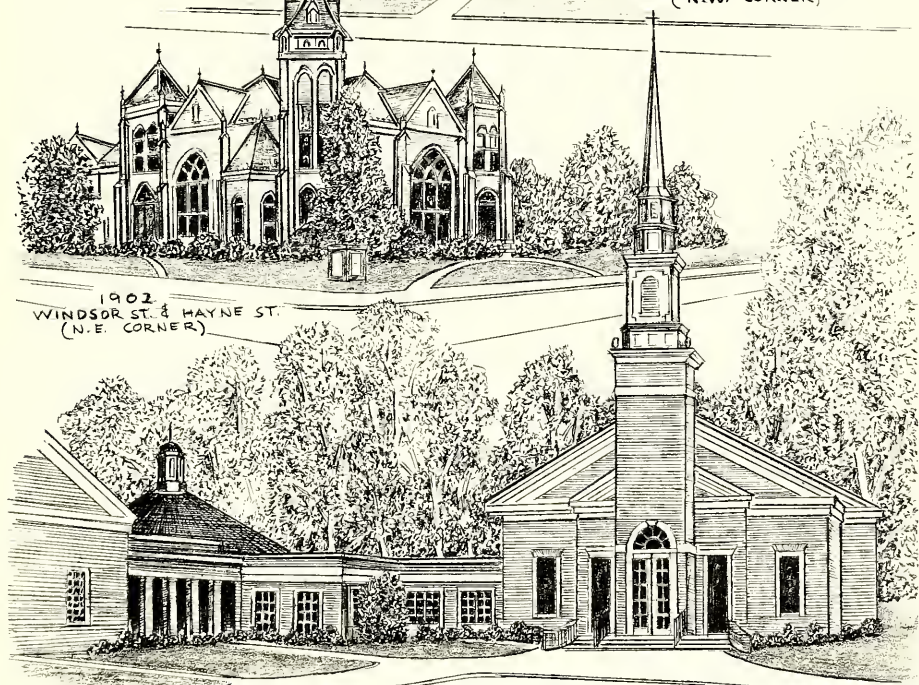
1844
CHURCH ST. & WINDSOR ST.



1870
WINDSOR ST. & HAYNE ST.
(N.W. CORNER)

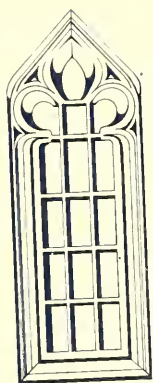


1902
WINDSOR ST. & HAYNE ST.
(N.E. CORNER)



1983
HAYNE ST. & SUNSET

JOHN BREWER
1994



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Virginia Kendrick



*East Window in Old
Sanctuary, 1902-1969*

ACTS 29:

The First 150 Years Of Central Methodist Church Monroe, North Carolina 1844-1994



By
Virginia A. S. Kendrick

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church for \$20, plus \$3 for mailing.*

801 S. Hayne Street
Monroe, NC 28112
704-289-3186

Library of Congress Catalog # 94-71354

Printed in USA
by
Delmar Printing Co.
Charlotte, NC

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INTRODUCTION

One person's dream becomes another person's heritage. History may have no larger commission than to affirm that. The past not only reveals the footprints that led us to the moment but suggests as well the directions the future must take to contain the moment's fondest dreams.

In his essay "Self-Reliance" Ralph Waldo Emerson remarks that "an institution is the lengthened shadow of one man." Today we would add "or woman," but more accurately to assess the institution that has become Central United Methodist Church, we would want to say, "several men and women." The dream that became our heritage was — and is — a progression in which each "dreamer" took his or her heritage and formed a new dream as a fresh legacy. A Methodist Society "over Winchester's store" became Monroe Methodist Episcopal Church (1844), which, at the General Conference of that year in New York City, became Monroe Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which became Central Methodist Episcopal Church, South (1897), which became Central Methodist Church (1939), which became Central United Methodist Church (1968). This heritage we celebrate after a century and a half is the continued and expanding dream of more persons than we will ever be able to count. A large part of our sesquicentennial celebration of Central United Methodist Church is the publication of this History.

Church history is the Church remembering itself. Gratitude, perhaps the most demanded and least practiced virtue in historiography, is the natural precipitate of honest memory. When in his work on heroes and worship of them, Thomas Carlyle declares history to be biography, he has in mind the lives of prominent leaders and others whom history records as heroes. The history of the Church is more accurately the biography of all who have served it, whose service sustained it and whose dreams became a part of our heritage.

Most of Central Church's "heroes" were lay men and women. That remains true today and will be true tomorrow. Pastors tend to receive too much credit for the Church's successes — and sometimes too much blame for what is perceived as failures — when in truth, while pastors come and go, the Church abides. Laypersons are the staying power of a congregation, and that we celebrate now with profound gratitude. The dreams of countless laypersons became my heritage as a pastor, here and in other places — any good pastor would affirm this — and to affirm that was always a part of my dream.

The Church is persons — faces, names, lives — and the Church is not the Church merely when it is assembled and practicing its

collective religion. Wherever an individual member is acting on her faith, whether Sunday, Tuesday or Saturday, the Church is visible and alive. I would like to think that it was not mere co-incidence that Union County, the town of Monroe, and Monroe Methodist Church were all established at about the same time. Some of the same people were working to establish all three, Christian men and women acting out their faith and able therewith to know that in community, whether religious, political or civic, people find larger security and more vital good. It is still true in Monroe, and other places, of course, that leaders in local churches are also active contributors to their larger communities.

As I write this, a dozen observations remind me that today is Veterans Day, 1993: flags waving on front porches; newspaper columnists remembering the wars whose veterans sustained our right to wave flags and, as some say, to burn them; news accounts of a new memorial to women's participation in the nation's struggles; and video accounts of the traditional presidential wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. I make such remarks as a demonstration to a point: any church which gathers as a congregation for worship and instruction also scatters — singly or by two or more — to give the same congregation, as well as the Church Universal, expression in all its many forms.

In Central's story which follows, one of the longest chapters will tell of the 1940's as a time of the congregation's busy involvement in a critical decade of its history and America's. The scores of Central's youth who marched away in uniform and the several who died in battle were no less the Church at Normandy and Iwo Jima than when teaching a class or attending worship on peaceful Sunday mornings. And as men and women of other states, other towns, other churches came to Camp Sutton near Monroe, perhaps to await their own turn at war, Central Church served them in many ways, opening its facilities and its volunteers to make, as nearly as possible, a home for them while they were away from their own. Wherever its members' compassion become an expression of faith and a show of love and concern, whether collectively or scattered, there is the visible Church responding to the call of its Lord.

It cannot, I believe, be overstated: the religion we practice at its designated places and in its appointed times may or may not have much to do with the faith we practice in all the places we live. Carlyle Marney once remarked that a person is always like his/her lord. Jesus said it much earlier in a different way: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6: 21). Whatever is most treasured in one's life, whether gold, status, power, or the eternal Christ, is free to practice lordship over the same life.

It is simply impossible to live a Christian life in the temple, for one lives so little of one's life there. Surely, it is truth that we do what we

truly believe. And since what we do is largely done in daily living, there will be seen what treasures our lives seek, what lord our lives follow.

It is lives lived with Christ as Lord which tell Central United Methodist Church's true history. That history is the biographies of all the members who followed faithfully the lead of Christ and became the Body of him who is Head of the Church. Thus, because Central's members, for a century and a half, have scattered into every corner of the life they shared in common, our celebration of Central's history is a celebration as well of Monroe City, Union County, North Carolina, the United States of America, and Earth itself.

A Christian may find peace in the thought that God does not demand our guarantee of results in the Church, whether the Church is acting collectively in its place or individually in its scattering. God's only requirement is that those who are the Church be faithful in the tasks to which they are called. If the goals the Church sets for itself are compatible with the eternal and indestructible Purpose God has revealed in Jesus Christ, the Word that sends us, as suggested in the Old Testament, will not return empty and without meaning.

Such faith sought and practiced was the dream of that century and a half we now celebrate and is the heritage we do well to accept. What our children's children's children celebrate in the year 2144 will be another 150 years whose glory was begun in the dreams we establish upon our heritage. We will be appropriately grateful to the past if and when the future finds grounds for similar gratitude to us.

But the ultimate gratitude in any century, where the Church remembers itself, is to almighty God, who called the Church into being as the People of God, gave it ministries worthy of divine Purpose, and promised to be with the faithful to the end of every age.

Central United Methodist Church has lived, is living, and will live through the ancient credo confirmed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ: "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth! Let [the earth] rejoice."

It is our call to fresh commitment for Central United Methodist Church in the 21st Century. "[They] who have ears to hear, let [them] hear." (Mark 4:9)

Joseph M. Reeves, D. Min.
Monroe, North Carolina
November, 1993

PREFACE

When one attempts to research and write the history of an organization, especially a church, it is almost impossible to try to give credit to all the participants. Unless it is to be solely a history of church buildings, there is a problem finding all the “saints” who should be included. Central Methodist has had its share of saints, both clergy and laypeople. Our hindsight from the modern era with all our comforts and conveniences makes us wonder if we could have survived, or our church could have survived, without the dedication and pure endurance of our forefathers (and mothers!). We have mentioned only a few of those deserving recognition. We took the easy way out and chose those who were easy to research.

Several people are due recognition for their help in assembling this book; they fall in two classes: research and coordination. I am indebted to Mary “Sis” Dillon and the staff at the Heritage Room in the old Union County Courthouse for secular background. For other research, thanks are due to: Nancy A. Spaine at the Methodist Archives for the Western North Carolina Conference Center in Charlotte; Herbert Hucks, Jr., at the South Carolina Conference Archives, the Sandor Teszler Library, Wofford College, Spartanburg, SC; William R. Erwin, Jr., at the Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, NC; and Bill Howie for his advice and experience from publishing *Footprints of Faith: Methodism in Union County*; and to Bob Winchester for trying to find lost records of the very early years. For personal recollections that rival any library or archives, Blanche Howie Benton has been invaluable. Frances Hunley has been diligent in tracing veterans that made the supreme sacrifice, and Cleone Gordon for complete listing of veterans. Doris Cornelius researched the part of the Appendix on symbols in our present church building.

In the process of getting the components of the book in some kind of order for publishing, several people helped immeasurably. Our former pastor, the Reverend Joe M. Reeves, graciously consented to do the introduction and did it so beautifully. The best proofreaders this side of Eternity are Frances Vick, Ruth Hunley, Helen Winchester, Jean Kluttz and Jane Furr (even if she is Presbyterian). Beth Love has coordinated the pictures and given advice on layout, as has Jo Bell. The other members of the Church History Committee have helped with decisions in various ways: Pete and Maude Lee, Walt Love, Giles Vick, Dan Shive, Vann Secrest, and Jake and Marge Plyler. The church staff has been patient with my information requests and invaluable in their knowledge. Ed Bohannon has functioned admirably as the publisher’s representative.

It is customary to dedicate a book to some person or group. Should we think of those who will carry on the work of Central Church? Yes, but the credit due those who have laid the foundation for our church’s future are those to whom we will always owe a debt of gratitude. Our heritage comes from them and our dedication goes to them. Just as the twenty-eight chapters of the Book of Acts tell of some of the early Christians, this book tells of our part of the continuing struggle and drama — that of being true to our faith in a world that gets more and more complicated. May the Lord walk with us on our journey.

Virginia Alexander Smith Kendrick



*Exterior of Old Church
Hayne & Windsor Streets, 1902-1969*



*Adult Sunday School Class
Phifer Hall, ca. 1940's*



*Woman's Group, WSCS
ca. Early 1940's*



*Youth Group
Phifer Hall, 1962*



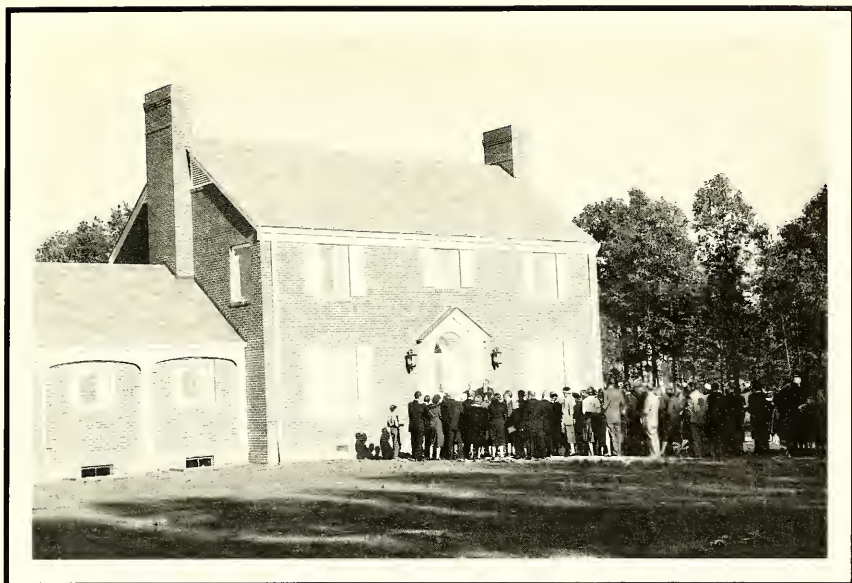
*Building Finance Committee,
Organized 1956
Jim Huntley
Charlie Hunley
Rev. Lee Spencer
Jake Plyler*



Building Committee, 1962



Building Finance Committee, 1962



*Dedication of New Parsonage
1003 Lakewood Drive
1959*



*Administrative Board
before move in 1969*



*Inside of Old Sanctuary
Showing Choir, ca. 1960's*



Mid 1930's



Vacation Bible School, 1963



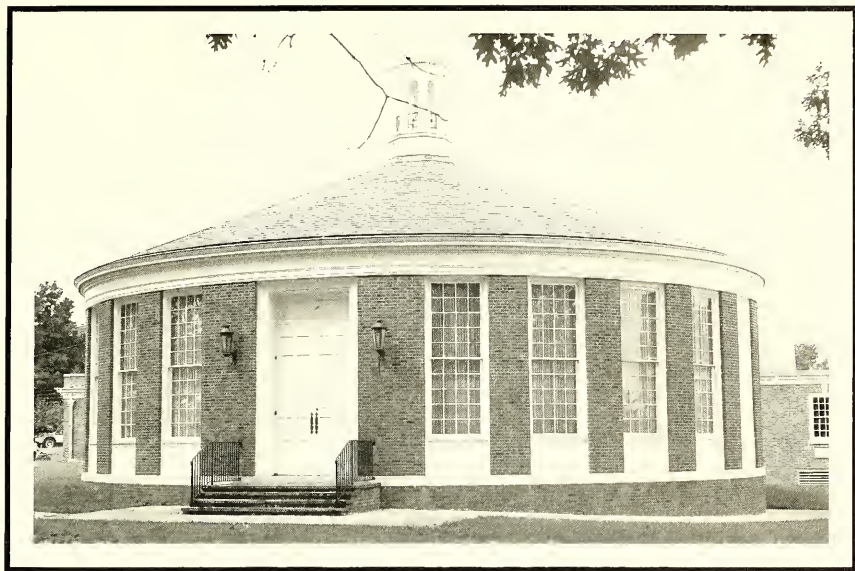
Confirmation Class, 1963



Education Building, 1969



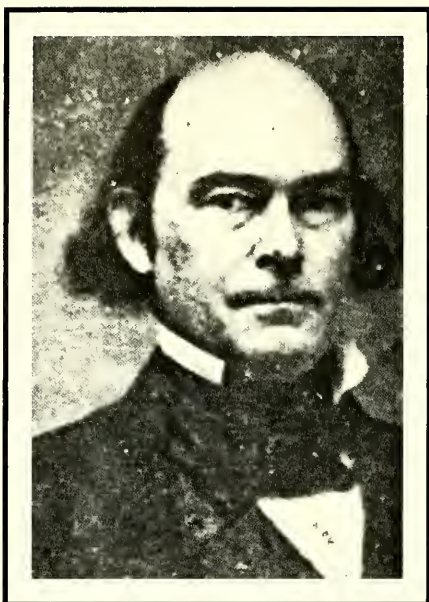
Central Hall and Administrative Wing, 1969



Chapel, 1969



Youth Building, 1969



*Rev. W. A. McSwain
1814-1866
Organizer of Central Church
May, 1844*



*Virginia A.S. Kendrick
Historian — Author
Central United Methodist Church*



Chapter One

CENTRAL'S BEGINNINGS

From Wesley to 1865

From the beginning of the Methodist Church (the first denomination founded) in the new United States after the close of the Revolutionary War, groups of believers gathered together in "societies" and met usually in homes. Because of the scarcity of preachers, "local" preachers or lay leaders would serve the group for long periods of time. The societies were grouped geographically into circuits, often with thirty or more societies in a single circuit. Into the 1800's, as more preachers were available to serve, the circuits grew, were subdivided, and small church buildings built, sometimes beginning from a brush arbor. (Camp meetings originated with the Methodists.) The larger churches were split off to form a "station"—they did not have to share a preacher with other churches.

Francis Asbury travelled all over the colonies and the new United States baptizing and winning converts to the new Methodist Church, beginning in October 1771, with his arrival in Philadelphia. He was one of five commissioned by John Wesley to go to America. Asbury was 26 years old and never married. He started keeping a journal on board ship and kept it up until his death in 1816.

Two quotations from his Journal give us insight into his feelings about his itineracy. "I am willing to travel and preach as long as I live; and I hope I shall not live long after I am unable to travel."¹ "...it is hard to civilize, methodize, and spiritualize; sin, Satan, flesh, and hell are against us."²

Asbury made several trips through the Carolinas and he mentions some places in or near the present Union County. His Journal entry of April 3, 1789, states in part, "I wish to send an extra preacher to the Waxsaws (sic), to preach to the Catawba Indians: they have settled amongst the whites on a tract of Country twelve miles square."³ Two days previous he talked about preaching at Jackson's, which is in the extreme southwest Anson County, quite near Union County. For March 27, 1791, the Journal entry reads, "Lord's Day, 27. We found the people insensible at the Waxsaws (sic) Church: some few seemed

alarmed whilst Isa. xxxiii, 14 was opened and enforced."⁴ Coming up from Camden, his Journal entry for March 13, 1794, states, "Thursday, 13. Rode thirty miles more to the Waxhaw, after preaching at the chapel in the woods. I went to Brother T_____’s, where we had a room to ourselves; and our horses were richly fed: this was a great favour—such as we do not generally receive in this country."⁵ Four days later he said he passed Charlotte; he also mentioned that he had ridden about a thousand miles in three months. There is another mention of Waxhaw in the Journal entry for March 8, 1797; the next two days he rode seventy miles—"We passed through a large settlement of Presbyterians" (probably around Steele Creek).⁶ A map also shows a stop in the southeast corner of the present Union County—it is labelled T. Shaw. He visited just south of that in South Carolina at Blakeney’s and over at Ansonville.⁷

For forty-five years he travelled an estimated 275,000 miles on horseback. He had no money—only what was given him—and no home—he slept wherever night found him. No wonder he is the most revered figure in American Methodism, according to Elmer T. Clark.

In 1904 the Reverend R.E. Stackhouse addressed the Historical Society of the South Carolina Conference and listed the following reasons that Methodism spread so fast in the years following the American Revolution.

- (1) Doctrines were simple, scriptural and preachable.
- (2) The itinerant preacher sought out the population in the backwoods where they lived, often preceding other forms of civilization, or even government.
- (3) The early Methodist ministers followed John Wesley’s appeal to the individual, even while trying to reach the masses. "With his hope of a real Heaven and his warning of a real hell the Methodist preacher made a direct appeal to the consciousness of immortality in every man."
- (4) With preachers so scarce and circuits so large, the local preachers and class leaders kept the societies together in day-to-day oversight.
- (5) The power of song, begun by Charles Wesley, cannot be overestimated as a teaching tool and an uplifting experience. Many a sermon was likely forgotten, but the hymn’s message lingered.
- (6) The spirit of dedication and self-sacrifice was present in Methodism’s early preachers. Their miles on horseback and other privations

accounted for the fact that one-third of them died before the age of thirty, and less than a third survived twelve years of the itineracy.

Asbury presided over the 24th session of the S.C. Conference beginning on Saturday, December 23, 1809, in Charleston. (He had visited the Waxhaws the previous month.) In the Catawba District was the Wateree Circuit; the preachers appointed to Wateree were Wiley Warwick and John Welch.⁸ The Monroe area was in the Wateree, SC, circuit from 1810 to 1836. Chreitzberg gives a description of the Wateree Circuit in 1810, as quoted by Betts. "Wateree Ct. then extended from 25-Mile Creek on the west side of Wateree River to Land's Ford on the Catawba, and on the east-side from near Camden to within 12 miles of Charlotte, N.C. 24 preaching places were compassed in four weeks, a distance of about 300 miles: membership 498 whites and 124 colored."⁹ The South Carolina Conference during this time contained Georgia and parts of south central and western North Carolina. The Union County area was in the South Carolina Conference until 1870.

The first meeting of our Central Church's founders was held in 1841 according to an historical sketch written in 1897 by Rev. W. R. Ware, pastor of our church at that time. He states, "Monroe first appears as a paying appointment August 9, 1844, and paid that year for support of the ministry \$3.05. But in 1841 Rev. W. A. McSwain had preached here on the sills of T. D. Winchester's store. The up stairs of said store was used for the Methodists to preach in until a church was built in 1842-'43 on the lot now occupied by the Presbyterians, which property was owned and occupied until the building of the present house of worship, 1870-'72."¹⁰

Ninety-seven years later it is difficult to question Ware's accuracy since he may have used early records lost to us. But some of his implications are hard to reconcile with other sources. We accept the year 1844 as the real birthday of our church, the same year the town of Monroe was incorporated in December. Union County had been formed in December, 1842, from parts of Anson and Mecklenburg Counties. Since there was not even a county road leading into the "town", we can imagine the congregation was not large. Monroe was chosen as the county seat because Henry Chaney sold 75 acres for \$75 in June 1843, to the chairman of the County Court for that purpose. The land was only 2 miles south of the geographical center of the county and soon the town was planned around a courthouse square. By 1850 the wooden courthouse had been built with Jefferson St. on the north, Hayne St. on the east, Franklin St. on the south, and Lafayette St. (now Main St.) on the west. The brick building now

known as the old City Hall had been erected about two years earlier; at least part of it was used as the county jail. The business district developed mostly down Lafayette St. The Winchester descendants think the store owned by T.D. Winchester was on the southwest corner of Hayne and Franklin across from the courthouse.

About 1833 the Lancaster Circuit was cut off from Wateree, which became a mission. At the February 1841, SC annual conference, the Lancaster Circuit reported 713 white members and 431 colored members; it was in the Columbia District. At the January 1842 annual conference our area was in the Cheraw District and John Watts was named as preacher for the newly created Pleasant Grove Circuit. The next year's report showed 7 Sunday schools, which means there were at least 7 churches on the circuit. A total of \$139.20 was collected for missions.

Rev. W. A. McSwain was assigned pastor of the Pleasant Grove Circuit for 1843, according to the South Carolina Annual Conference Minutes of February 8, 1843. The Monroe area was in the Lancaster Circuit in 1840. It became the Waxhaw Circuit in January, 1841, then the Pleasant Grove Circuit from 1842-1865. In 1842 when John Watts was named to the new Pleasant Grove Circuit, it included the future town of Monroe. It is logical that McSwain would not have preached here in Monroe unless it was in his circuit. So we can conclude that if his preaching was from May 7-14, as tradition holds, that it was in 1843. Tradition also has it that the Winchester store had burned and there were timbers piled up at the site for repairing the building. It was on these wooden planks that the little congregation sat to listen to the Reverend McSwain. He organized a "society", the beginnings of our church. The society continued to meet above Winchester's store until the group built a small wooden church on the southeast corner of Windsor and Church Streets. If the society only paid \$3.05 for ministerial support in 1844, as Ware said, how could they afford to build even a log church? Also it was a good three blocks from the courthouse, and the courthouse area built up first. Later a grid pattern for the streets was laid out from the courthouse square. It is doubtful that much was built for a few years except right around the courthouse. The old City Hall was built about 1848. At any rate, this early church building was well built, as it lasted about 120 years until torn down in the 1960's. After the Presbyterians bought it from the Methodists in early 1875 and used it for twenty-five years, the building was moved out from town to be used as a barn by Mr. Vernon

Lockhart, whose house stood at about 1410 East Franklin St. (It was torn down when his house was demolished.)

In 1861 a state act was passed enlarging Monroe; the commissioners who were to establish the streets and alleys were: Hugh M. Houston, John P. Houston, Thomas D. Winchester, and D.F. Hayden. These were all leaders in our fledgling Methodist church in Monroe.

The Reverend William Abney McSwain was a prominent Methodist minister in the South Carolina Conference in the mid-1800s. He was born in Montgomery County (now Stanly), NC, on November 5, 1814, entered the itinerant ministry in 1838, and was admitted to the conference on trial in 1839. After a number of appointments to circuits and stations, he was presiding elder (now called district superintendent) of the Cokesbury District. He was elected one of the representatives of the South Carolina Conference to three general conferences (1854, 1858, and the conference which was to meet in 1862). After laboring in circuits and stations for 27 years, an accident on November 26, 1865, led to his death about a month later on January 1, 1866. He was survived by a wife and four children.¹¹

One source of information on preachers is from abstracts of reports on marriages and deaths from the *Southern Christian Advocate*. In Volume I: 1837-1860, there are 35 references to McSwain. Many of these are deaths and marriages of his parishioners which he would have written and submitted for publication. He reported two deaths from the Pleasant Grove Circuit in 1843: James Hagius, age 38 died June 27, 1843, in Lancaster, SC (p. 72); and Dr. John Osburn Heath, age 23, died September 10, 1843, also in Lancaster (p. 77). On page 115 he reported the death of the Reverend John Craven, age 52, father-in-law of the Reverend John McMackin (who served the Pleasant Grove Circuit in 1846), on September 14, 1846. Page 134 reports the death of Serena McSwain on September 15, 1847; she was born on September 5, 1794, in Rutherford County, NC, daughter of Gabriel and Priscilla Washburn; Serena was the mother of 16, including "one of the most useful members of the South Carolina Conference", the Reverend W. A. McSwain. On page 175 McSwain's father's death is reported — Charles McSwain, age 63, died December 19, 1848 in Stanly County, NC, leaving a widow (he must have re-married) and 13 children. On June 9, 1855, (page 383) William Andrew McSwain died, youngest child of the Reverend W. A. and Elizabeth McSwain, age 4 years, 2 mo., 25 days. In Volume II: 1861-1867, there is the report of the death of another McSwain son, Sgt. Horace A. McSwain, born December 9, 1843, (probably at the Pleasant Grove parsonage), killed at Manassas

on August 20, 1862. Thus we get a biographical glimpse of our founding father. (His photograph is printed near the beginning of this book.)

The year 1844 is important in the history of our Central Church, but the date has wider implications for the Methodist Episcopal Church as a whole. It was the year that the church split into a Northern branch and a Southern branch—the breach lasted 95 years. The circumstances were as follows.

James Osgood Andrew was a Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church from Georgia. In 1844 he was married to Mrs. Leonora Greenwood, who had inherited slaves from her former husband. (Andrew's first wife died in 1842.) Bishop Andrew renounced all personal property rights in ownership of the slaves but when the General Conference met in May of 1844 in New York City, a conflict arose. The idea of a bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church owning slaves was so abhorrent to the Northern delegates that the debate raged for several days. Bishop Andrew was willing to resign his episcopal office but the Southern delegates insisted that he not do so. The result was a "Plan of Separation" passed by the General Conference looking to the organization of all Annual Conferences in the slave-holding states to form an independent and self-governing Southern church. Representatives of all the Southern Annual Conferences met in convention at Louisville, KY, in May 1845, and formed the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The first session of the General Conference of the MECS was held at Petersburg, VA in May 1846. The Northern church continued to use the name Methodist Episcopal Church.¹²

The Reverend Abel Hoyle was appointed pastor for the Pleasant Grove Circuit on February 7, 1844, but he died on September 8 of that year at age 33. Hoyle was born in Lincoln County, NC, on January 21, 1811, and was admitted on trial in 1837. He was raised in a German Reform community and converted at Rock Spring camp ground in the Lincolnton circuit. "His remains were deposited in the burying-ground near Union Church, where they will rest until the last trump shall wake them to eternal life."¹³ There are two references to Hoyle in *The Southern Christian Advocate* abstracts, Volume 1: in 1838 he reported a death in Rutherford County, NC, (p. 13) and a death in 1843 at Chesterfield, SC. (p. 70). His death was reported on page 92. He entered the itinerancy in 1837, along with subsequent pastors W.C. Clark, John McMackin, and Lewis Scarborough. Hoyle's salary was \$165.60, so the other churches on the circuit must have been more

affluent than the small society in Monroe (which tradition holds paid only \$3.05 for support).

The Reverend Edward L. King was appointed pastor on Christmas Day, 1844, and served for the year 1845. He was born in Fairfield District, South Carolina, on February 17, 1819 and was admitted on trial in 1839. He "located" (left the itineracy) in 1842, was re-admitted in 1844 and assigned to Pleasant Grove. In 1852 he located again and moved to Florida. After being re-admitted in 1873, he was sent to the Berkley Circuit, then the Columbia Circuit, where he died on November 19, 1875 (at age 56). "As a preacher, he was plain, earnest, practical, always conveying to the minds of his hearers the impression that he was deeply convinced of the truth of what he was preaching."¹⁴ From *The Southern Christian Advocate* abstracts, Volume 1, page 624, "Died at the parsonage on Pleasant Grove Circuit on the 13th inst, Rebecca Cornelia, the younger child of Rev. E.L. and M.M. King, age 1 year 10 months 18 days." (This would have been July 13, 1845.)

The first Quarterly Conference of our church was held on February 7, 1846, according to the Reverend Ware's sketch written in 1897. The official members present at the first quarterly conference were: the Reverend John McMackin, Pastor in Charge (appointed in December of 1845); Adam Ivy, local preacher; J.T. Draffin, L.P.; J. Houston, class leader and steward; B.M. Porter, J. Ormond, H. King, Benj. Trott, class leaders; and J. Wentz, class leader and steward. The circuit had 115 white members and 27 colored members. The Reverend John McMackin was appointed pastor for the Pleasant Grove circuit at the December 1845, South Carolina Annual Conference and served until his death on August 16, 1846, at age 35. He was succeeded by Joseph Galluchut for the rest of the conference year, according to tradition. Galluchut was admitted to the itineracy in 1847 and was discontinued in 1848.

The marriage of the Reverend John McMackin to Miss Minta Carver on January 30, 1840, in Randolph County, NC, is recorded on page 26 of Volume I of *The Southern Christian Advocate*. McMackin reported three deaths, most likely parishioners, in Shelby in 1842. The Reverend McMackin's death is on page 107; McMackin of the Pleasant Grove Circuit died on the Sabbath morning August 16, 1846. McMackin's mother, Susannah, born February 16 1788, married May 15, 1811, died in Cabarrus County, NC on August 25, 1857. (p.476) McMackin's father, David, died December 26, 1858, at age 71; he "first joined the Lutheran Church, but in 1827 exchanged Luther for Wesley." (p.539) John McMackin was born in Cabarrus County, NC, on

January 4, 1813. "He may be regarded among the trophies won by Christ through the instrumentality of camp-meetings. He found the 'pearl of great price' at Center camp-ground in August, 1832 . . . He has served the Church as an efficient travelling preacher for eight years and six months . . . A few days before his death he was attacked with intermittent bilious-fever. He was not thought to be dangerously ill until a few hours before his death." He was "called from his labors to his reward, on Sabbath morning the 16th August, 1846."¹⁵

Most of the early pastors served one year; conference was held in December or January (beginning about 1853 the date was usually in November). Appointed to Pleasant Grove Circuit in January, 1847, was the Reverend Willis S. Haltom; he was admitted in 1833 and transferred to the North Carolina Conference in 1870 when it was reformed to coincide with the boundaries of the state. *The Southern Christian Advocate*, Volume 1, has several references to Haltom (sometimes spelled "Halton"). Page 15 reports his marriage to Miss Adaline Norwood of Montgomery County, NC, on Monday, December 27, 1839. He reported two deaths while at his Pleasant Grove appointment. One on March 16, 1847, for Mrs. Rachel M. Winchester, consort of Josiah Winchester, daughter of Dr. Josiah Cuthbertson; her age was 21 and she was survived by her husband and an infant child. The other death was sister Mary R. Wolf, consort of Sampson Wolf, dated March 20, 1847. Her age was 35 years 3 months and she was the daughter of John and Elizabeth Bowdon. She was first married to Moses Ezzell in the year 1831 with whom she lived about six years. He died leaving her and two little sons. She married Mr. Wolf in 1845. On page 578 *The Advocate* reported the marriage of Haltom's only daughter on December 13, 1859, to Charles W. Bradshaw in Concord, NC. In the SC annual conference minutes for 1864 Haltom was listed as supernumerary with the church in Concord.

The Reverend Hugh E. Ogburn was the preacher for 1848, having been received on trial in the SC conference in January, 1838. In 1850 he was allowed to rest on account of ill health, returned to the itineracy through 1856. He held a superannuated (retired) relation until his death on January 19, 1860.¹⁶ *The Southern Christian Advocate*, Volume 1, page 98 reported the death of the Ogburn's second son, Samuel A. G., on February 9, 1845, age 4 months 19 days, in the Williamsburg district.

The Reverend William C. Clark was first appointed to Pleasant Grove in December 1848, and again in November 1853. He was admitted in 1837 and located (left the ministry) in 1855. He continued

as a local preacher until his death at age 48. He joined the army in the spring of 1861, contracted a disease while serving in the army, was discharged, and died at Ansonville, NC, on December 2, 1861.¹⁷ The SCA abstracts, Volume 1, page 84 reported the marriage of the Reverend Clark to Miss Elizabeth Amanda Waller of Upper Allsaints Parish, SC on March 21, 1844. Then on page 109 appears the report of the marriage of the Reverend Clark to Miss Amanda A. Area of Concord, NC in October 1846. Three events were reported by Clark in Union County in 1854. Dr. Cuthbertson of Monroe, NC, died on May 2 at age 52. Reported in July was the death in Union County, NC, of Mrs. Eliza Howey, wife of David Howey, at age 45, leaving a husband and several children. The Reverend Clark performed the marriage ceremony on November 9 for Emerson Broom of Monroe to Miss Jane Rea of Union County, NC.

The first pastor to serve two consecutive years was the Reverend W. C. Patterson. Born in Lincoln (now Gaston) County, NC, on May 15, 1807, he lived past his ninetieth birthday, dying in Van Wyck, Lancaster County, SC, on December 18, 1897. He was brought up in the Presbyterian faith but converted to Methodism and joined the SC conference in 1836. He was married to Miss Margaret Chamber in August 1828 in York County, SC. He was appointed to Pleasant Grove in December of 1849 and again the following December. He was superannuated from 1854 until his death 43 years later.¹⁸ In January, 1853, Patterson was sent back to Pleasant Grove for another year. In the SCA abstracts, Volume 1, Patterson reported two marriages in 1850 on page 208: on May 28 Dr. W.W. Twitty married Miss Caroline Crocket and on June 25 William L. Howie married Miss Sarah E. Lyde. In Union County, NC on May 29, 1853, James Houston was married to Miss Martha E. Walkup (page 307). On pages 456/7 is the Patterson's report of the May 5, 1857, marriage of G. D. Broom of Wolfsville, NC, to Miss Mary P. Porter of Lancaster District, SC, at the home of John Porter, Sr. Two marriages by Patterson were on page 494: December 15, 1858, in Lancasterville, SC, Felix McCarnon, Esq. to Miss Amelia A. Kennedy; and on January 14, 1859, Dr. I. N. Nesbit to Miss Mary Jane Phifer at the the home of Reverend A. Ivy, all of Lancaster, SC. On November 23, 1858, James T. Lee, Esq. was married to Miss Mary Emily Howie (page 531). On January 27, 1859 Mr. William Crow was married to Miss Fetnah C. Heath, both of Union County, NC (page 542). Page 569 reported a double wedding of October 11, 1859; I. M. Heath of Union County, NC, was married to Miss Hester C. Patterson of Spartanburg, SC at the residence of Mr. E. S. Chambers near Epps

Springs, NC. At the same place and date was the report of the marriage of Robert H. Posten, Esq. of the Lancaster District to Miss Laura C. Patterson, late of Georgia—we do not know if these were the daughters of the Reverend Patterson.

The Reverend Lewis (or Louis) Scarborough was admitted to the SC conference in 1837 and was first appointed to Pleasant Grove in December of 1851. He was appointed again in November 1857, a year after it was changed to Monroe Circuit. In 1851 Pleasant Grove had 587 white members and 212 colored members; in 1857 Monroe had 817 white members and 273 colored members. During his second pastorate Scarborough had a Junior Preacher to serve with him, the Reverend John W. Abernathy. The SCA abstracts, Volume 1 reported on page 40 the marriage on Tuesday, February 23, 1841, of the Reverend Scarborough to Miss Ann Bethea of Harleesville, Marion District, SC. The poignant report on page 99 is of the death of William, son of the Reverend Louis and Ann Scarborough, at age 3 years 8 days after a short but painful illness, at the home of Mrs. Bethea. Scarborough died in 1884 at age 75.

The Reverend William M. Easterling was appointed in November, 1854 (only three years after he was admitted on trial as a member of the South Carolina Conference). He was born in the Colleton District of South Carolina on August 18, 1816, and converted in 1841. Easterling died at age 39 in Monroe on September 29, 1855.¹⁹ About this time it was decided to move the parsonage for the circuit to Monroe. A house on Parker St. was bought from J.D. Stewart for \$500. The circuit name was changed from Pleasant Grove to Monroe Circuit at the 1856 annual conference.

While the Reverend George W. Ivy was pastor, 1856-1857, Hugh McCombs Houston's name first appears as a steward; he was also Sunday school superintendent. Born to John and Elizabeth Potts Houston near Stouts (then Mecklenburg County) in 1817, he lived in Monroe for fifty-five years and was reported to be the wealthiest man in the county. He had wide business interests, including retailing, banking and railroad. He was a very active member of Monroe Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and a steward until his death in November 1901. He and his wife had eight children, five of whom died in infancy. After his wife's death in 1884, Houston made his home with his daughter, Ellen Houston Fitzgerald. Mrs. Fitzgerald had no children when she died in 1916. Her will surprised and delighted the citizens of Union County when it was revealed she left her home on South Hayne Street at Morrow Avenue to be used as a hospital. There

was no hospital in the county at that time; the Ellen Fitzgerald Hospital formed the nucleus for health care in Union County for over thirty years, after it was opened in 1921.

In an 1857 article, published forty years later in a Wadesboro paper (and reprinted in the *Monroe Enquirer Journal* of September 27, 1974, page B-1), young Jim Ardrey of Providence (Mecklenburg County) and R.B. Gaddy of Anson County, told of a ride in a buggy from Providence on New Town Road into Monroe. He said Monroe then consisted of the D.A. Covington residence, the Winchester Store, the Shute Mercantile establishment and Bickett's Tavern. They stopped at Bickett's Tavern for dinner and "Father Bickett in his shirt sleeves talked about the Bible to us." This was James Bickett, the first jailer, also owner of Bickett's Tavern, located on the northwest corner of Jefferson and Beasley Streets, at 111 East Jefferson St. In our earliest roll of members, dated 1868, James Bickett is listed as "Licentiate", or local preacher. His son, Dr. Thomas Winchester Bickett, was a steward in 1868, at age 23. Dr. Bickett was one of the earliest practicing physicians after serving in the Confederate Army as an assistant surgeon. In 1866 he married Mary Ann Covington of Monroe. One of their four children was Governor Thomas Walter Bickett (North Carolina's governor during World War I); his baptism is recorded in the church record for 1873.

In November of 1855 the Reverend George Washington Ivey (or Ivy) was first appointed to the Pleasant Grove Circuit. He had been admitted to the South Carolina Conference in 1851 and in 1870 transferred to the North Carolina Conference. His appointment was two years after the circuit was changed from the Lincolnton District (1848-1853) to the Charlotte District. We are fortunate to have G. W. Ivey's obituary written by J. E. Thompson to be included in the 1902 minutes of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference (which conference incidentally was held at the "new" church building at Central Church, Monroe). The obituary states he was born in Stanly County, NC, on September 14, 1828, and died in Granite Falls, NC on November 7, 1902, after serving continuously for 52 years as an itinerant Methodist minister. He was married in 1855 to Miss Selina R. Neal and died on their forty-seventh anniversary. The widow survived him, along with five sons and two daughters. When he died, he was serving the Caldwell Circuit. The obituary states, "He attended his Quarterly Conference at Grace Chapel, November 1-2, in his usual health, having met every appointment this year. At the close of the communion service, he led the congregation in a prayer of unusual

power, even for him. He seemed to be within the gates of the city and was talking to God face to face. After the service he joined the crowd in the grove for dinner. He went to Ebenezer Church to preach a funeral at 3 p.m. He had been preaching about 20 minutes when he was seized with acute indigestion and was forced to take his seat. His text was I Timothy, 6:12—'Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.' His last words were, 'Eternal life is ____' The sentence was not finished here, but he now knows what that life is." These obituaries, or memorials as they were sometimes called, are interesting not only in the phrasing but also because we get a glimpse of the life of our itinerant Methodist preachers.

In 1855 the conference minutes reported six local preachers for the circuit. Membership was 509 white members and 239 colored members. With a circuit that size additional pastoral care was needed. The Reverend Lewis Scarborough returned late 1857 for a year with Junior Preacher the Reverend John W. Abernathy, followed by the Reverend Minton A. Connolly, with Reverend Robert W. Burgess, Junior Preacher. Connolly was admitted in 1854 and died in 1894 at age 65. The two pastors are thought to have preached every day except Monday (that was their day of rest.)

In 1860-1861 the Reverend B. G. Jones was pastor; his first year John W. Hutchinson was Junior Preacher in 1860, and Girard W. DuPre for the year 1861. DuPre was a promising young man but was in declining health and died in 1861 after resigning. Basil G. Jones was born July 30, 1814, in Davie County, NC. He joined the South Carolina Conference in 1853 and was active for 33 years in the ministry. He was superannuated for the four years before his death on February 9, 1891.²⁰ Good revivals were held during the two Jones years.

Beginning in 1862 Reverend J. W. Puett was pastor for two years, with J. L. Stoudemire as Junior Preacher the first year, and Thomas H. Edwards the second year. In 1865 during the second year pastorate of the Reverend William W. Jones, with Evan A. Lemmond as Junior Preacher, the Monroe circuit was divided. West of Rocky River Road became Pleasant Grove Circuit and to the east was Monroe Circuit. The 1865 annual conference also made the Monroe church a "station". Its formal name was Monroe Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The Reverend A. J. Stafford was the first to serve the Monroe Station; it was too small to need a junior preacher. The circuit membership (before it was divided) was 1186 white and 426 colored. At the end of its first year as a station the Monroe church had 109 white and 44 colored members.

We have no primary records in the form of quarterly conference minutes for the years that our church was on a circuit. These records would have stayed with the circuit, but we do not know who had possession of them. George Winchester, who lived in the Pleasant Grove area, may have had some of the records. His home had a room upstairs that was commonly called the "archives" by his friends. When his house burned in the 1960's these records were lost. He wrote several historical articles about early Methodism in Union County.

NOTES

1 Elmer T. Clark, *Francis Asbury in North Carolina* (Nashville, TN: The Parthanon Press, 1964) title page.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., 93

4 Ibid., 111

5 Ibid., 126

6 Ibid., 147

7 Elmer T. Clark, *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*, vol. 1 (Nashville: Abington Press, 1958) 361.

8 Albert Deems Betts, *History of South Carolina Methodism* (Columbia, SC: The Advocate Press, 1952) 120, 121.

9 Ibid., 121

10 The Rev. W. R. Ware, *Historical Sketch and Directory of the Central Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (1907) 8.

11 Betts, 233

12 Allen Johnson, editor, *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928) 277-279.

13 The Reverend Albert M. Shipp, D.D., *The History of Methodism in South Carolina* (Nashville, TN: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1883) 620.

14 Ibid., 625

15 Ibid., 631

16 Ibid., 634

17 Betts, 511

18 1898 Minutes of the South Carolina Annual Conference.

19 Shipp, 615

20 1891 Minutes of the South Carolina Annual Conference.



Chapter Two

THE YOUNG CHURCH STRUGGLES

1865-1871

The oldest Quarterly Conference book dates from November 1865, to November 1876. Thus it begins when Monroe became a station. It records some very lean years and a gradual increase in the fortunes of the church. Always prominent in the list of stewards is the name of Thomas D. Winchester, all the time up to his death in 1895; he must be considered one of the towering influences among the founding fathers of our church, serving in some capacity for about fifty years. For the conference year of 1865-1866 the P.C. (pastor in charge) was the Reverend A.J. Stafford, the P.E. (Presiding Elder — like a district superintendent) was the Reverend F.Milton Kennedy. Stewards were James Bickett, J.E. Irby, A.L. Funderburk, H.J. Wolfe, Thomas D. Winchester, Thomas W. Bickett, John P. Houston, and C.L. Helms. Budget for the year was optimistically set at \$500. The pastor's salary was \$225, plus \$200 for his board and \$15 for contingency expenses. Budgeted for the P.E. was \$23 for quarterage (rent) and \$37 for board (of course the other churches contributed to his expenses too). The amount collected the first quarter was \$27, for the second quarter it was \$52.60. For many years the pattern was for the stewards to hold a special meeting in November before annual conference to "settle up". We can imagine that much of the amount needed to pay out the budget was from the stewards' own pockets.

On February 10, 1866, Stafford reported to the second quarterly conference on the sabbath schools as follows: "We have been unable so far to have a school this year. We have been offered the use of the Academy, a comfortable building with two fireplaces situated near the church, and it is certain a very respectable number of children would attend if arrangements were made for instructing them. But so far only two or three persons have agreed to serve as teachers. This subject is earnestly commended to the attention of parents and of

young gentlemen and ladies capable of teaching who might here find a field for much usefulness. The former policy of having a school only during the warm weather we believe ought to be abandoned and the school to be started at once and kept up for the time to come without any intermission for the winter".

The Academy referred to may be the building where the present Episcopal Church is. It was called Old Temperance Hall and was used for temperance meetings. St. Paul's Episcopal Church was organized in 1874 and bought that lot and building in 1887.

On March 11, 1866, the sabbath school was finally opened and served the whole community, especially during times when other denominations were without regular pastors. The report to the third quarterly conference on June 2, 1866, says in part: "A tolerable number of children attend; though there are many others within hearing of the Bell that never go either to Sunday school or to church. The cordial encouragement and cooperation of parents and members of the church are much needed to bring these neglected lambs under the influence of religious instruction."

The following baptisms are recorded for 1866:

April 15, 1866, John Thomas, son of Henry H. & Emeline Fincher

June 13, 1866, Emma Florence and David Franklin, son and daughter of Wm. H. and Ann J. Houston

July 29, 1866, Cora, daughter of T.D. & E.J. Winchester.

At the fourth quarterly conference, held August 18, 1866, the Sunday school (still sometimes called the sabbath school) numbered one superintendent, 15 teachers, and about ninety scholars. Concern was first expressed about the inadequate library; this was brought up for a number of years as the library gradually grew to about 300 volumes. Then it ceased to be mentioned as a problem. A recurring theme was the need for teachers. There was mention in 1868 of a singing school in connection with Sunday school that was well received.

New members could be acquired by letter, that is by transfer from another church, or removed by letter. Those who did not come from another church had to be baptised before being accepted "upon profession of correct faith and willingness to keep the rules of the church." In some cases there seems to have been a probationary period. The Methodist Church was only one of the denominations that frowned on such worldly pleasures as card-playing, circus-going, theater-going, and dancing. The preacher always included in his State of the Church report how many were expelled but seldom the reason.

Some preachers were probably more lenient than others. The Reverend Daniel May served the church for the year 1876 and recorded in his report that he expelled 8 members for dancing. Some were suspended for a day or a month, rather than being expelled; they probably saw the error of their ways and promised to go and sin no more. It is thought that the Episcopal Church was the beneficiary of at least some of the "worldly" former Methodists. For two weeks in the fall of 1877, a Dancing School was opened, resulting in a lively exchange of comments in the local newspaper.

When the Reverend John R. Little arrived to take over the station mid-January, 1867, he found on the roll the names of 110 white and 43 colored but he could not account for all of them. Some had moved away, some lived some distance from the church and were unable to attend. In March he reported to the quarterly conference that attendance was good and attention very good. Because of the wet, cold weather they were not having night services nor Sunday school, "our church being without a stove." In June he reported that Sunday school resumed on April 11 with about 75 scholars, but that number grew to 100 in two months. "The best of harmony prevails and our school is prosperous and flattering. More interest is manifested on the part of parents in behalf of the school than is usual. Many still are outside perishing for the sincere milk of the word without much disposition to come forward and receive it". In reporting on the membership, one white was received "having correct views of the doctrine of our church and manifesting a desire to flee the wrath to come and to be saved from his sins." The membership roll counted 106 whites and 37 colored;" The whites are all accounted for, the colored have been pleased to abandon my pastoral care though there have but two of them transferred their membership." John C. Sikes is listed as a steward for the first time. The amount collected for the support of the ministry was \$17.80 for the quarter; \$8.50 collected for the poor.

By the November conference the Reverend Little still decried the lack of books in the library but was pleased with the Sunday school. They had purchased a stove and planned to continue Sunday school through the winter. As usual, it took a special meeting of the stewards to make a final financial settlement for the year past. The Presiding Elder was paid \$50. The pastor's salary was \$225, travelling expenses \$20, plus board and lodging.

The Reverend J.R. Little stayed another year, until the end of 1868, and remained, on the whole, complimentary and optimistic. He reported 102 members in January, so he seemed to have culled the roll

of the colored members; they were probably forming their own churches during this period. He was always enthusiastic in his praise of the Sunday school, which was year-round now. He reported three members expelled, no explanation. Repairs were made on the church building to make it more comfortable. At the fourth quarterly conference, held on November 13 before annual conference, the membership stood at 95, 31 males and 64 females. He reported few males attend prayer meeting or partake of the Lord's Supper. The church closed out the financial year in good order: pastor paid \$225, P.E. \$40, also \$2.80 for the bishop, \$3.15 for conference collection, and \$5.25 for education.

There exists a partial register beginning in 1868; the listing of members is mostly readable. The attendance is recorded for these members for four meetings. The book also contains brief minutes for the seven "monthly meetings" held after church usually on the first Sunday of the month in 1868. "The roll was called and marked", so the recorded attendance must have been for some four of these.

The first monthly meeting for Monroe station was held after preaching, in church, February 2, 1868.

Pastor's report: "Brethren, every day's observance proves to me that the devil, as a roaring lion, is going about seeking whom he may devour. My heart is continually made to tremble on account of the flock over which I am an overseer. I have been made to weep between the porch and the altar because of the delinquency of some of our members, as well as for those who are perishing without. While this is so, we thank God that there are some who manifest unwearied fidelity to the cause of our Heavenly Master. On the whole, the church is, perhaps, in as good condition as at the time of any previous report." J. R. Little

Other meetings were like trials where charges, usually unspecified, were brought against a member. At the March meeting "the pastor made a verbal statement of charges and trial of two members who were expelled. Adjourned with benediction." At the April meeting George Cook was expelled by a vote of the church after a committee investigated reports concerning him and reported unfavorably.

There was no pastor assigned for the 1869 year but the work, especially the Sunday school, seemed to continue as usual. Preachers were supplied regularly and F.L. Watt acted as superintendent for the Sunday school. The reports were scarce.

In 1870 the General Conference set off Monroe and adjacent territory from the South Carolina Conference to the North Carolina

Conference — thus all of North Carolina was in one conference for the next twenty years. The Reverend W.T. McClellan was the new pastor for 1870, and he found much work to be done. The first trustees were chosen: T.D. Winchester, G.C. McLarty, James McLarty, H.M. Houston, and T.W. Bickett. The second quarterly conference, held on April 28, contained the first reports by the Reverend McClellan. The very long Sunday school report said the school was thriving but he had biting criticism of fathers who were too busy for their children. He said that the Sunday school could not make up in one day for a father who was too busy for his children the other six days of the week. Home instruction was more important than Sunday school. His even longer report on the state of the church begins, "Our church has nothing to boast of. We have a membership of 87 . . . In the majority of the Methodist families of Monroe church the fire has gone out on the altar at home, no incense there from day to day . . . With some the family altar has never been erected." He said some dying child may say, "I never heard my father pray". But he was particularly critical of the Board of Stewards, lamenting the want of an efficient board. He said the only meeting thus far that year was when Brothers Wolfe and Houston met for 20 minutes. "It may be I have failed to prepare the stewards, but I confess I have already hinted so much about my year's salary that frequently I thought some good brother whose purse strings are tight . . . might say that I was seeking influence and not the welfare of Christ." With the year half over, nothing was reported to have been collected for support of the ministry. It was predictable that the Reverend McClellan would not return for a second year in Monroe.

The last two quarterly conferences for 1870 showed an improved opinion by the pastor — maybe he finally was paid something. The Sunday school had grown to 125 scholars and 14 teachers, the library had increased to 300 volumes. There were 21 new members during this time, so things were indeed looking up. Stewards for the year 1871 were elected: T.D. Winchester, A.F. Stevens, H.J. Wolfe, E.A. Armfield, C.L. Helms, G.C. McLarty and J.J. Lockhart. At the fourth quarterly conference the following were named as a building committee for a new church: H.M. Houston, Thomas D. Winchester, A.F. Stevens and E.A. Armfield.

The earliest complete roll book of Monroe Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is dated 1871. The "Class Book", or Register, lists the names of members (male members, then female), marriages and baptisms. There are 50 male members and 81 females. Twenty-three

were received into the membership of the church on one day: September 24, 1871. The Reverend B. F. Dixon was the "P.C.", or Preacher in Charge. The officials for the conference year 1871 were:

James E. Irby, Local Deacon

James Bickett, Licentiate

Stewards: T. D. Winchester

H. J. Wolfe

A. F. Stevens

C. L. Helms

A. E. Armfield

John D. Stewart

George C. McLarty

J. H. Walsh, Supt. Sunday School

H. M. Houston, Trustee

T. W. Bickett, Trustee

J. M. McLarty, Trustee

For the year 1872 there is a new listing of the officials and members. In addition to the above named officials, D. J. Winchester and John C. Sikes are listed, as well as C.E. Lande (Supply Preacher). J. Landford is identified as Local Elder, with the note "joined N. C. Conference Dec. 1872." Fifty males and 79 females were included in the new list for 1872 members. The Reverend Dixon was still the pastor till fall of 1873.

The new P.C. for 1874 was the Reverend T. P. England, who stayed only one year. He wrote: "Dear Brethren and Sisters Remember the Fryday (sic) before each Quarterly meeting as a day of fasting and prayer. Strive to enter in at the start gate, for many shall seek to enter and shall not be able. The peace of God which passeth all understanding keep your minds and hearts through fast unto everlasting life. Amen." W. S. Black was the new P. E. (Presiding Elder, or District Superintendent). Fifty-two males and 98 females are listed.

The year 1875 welcomed a new P. C., the Reverend M. V. Sherrill, for one year only; the P. E. was J. S. Nelson. Sherrill listed the members by families alphabetically, with notes as to where they live, such as "town" or "5 miles southeast". The following were listed as "Expelled": Maggie Howie, Frank H. Wolfe and his sister C. I. Wolfe, Henry Boylin, Virginia A. Laney, Maggie C. Turner, W. S. Ringstaff. Mary J. Stevens was suspended one day for unchristian conduct and H. Smith suspended one month, same reason. Two hundred twenty-two members are in the next list, probably 1878, as the handwriting looks like that of the Reverend J. H. Guinn, who stayed for three years.

The last listing of the membership totals 231 and seems to be complete for 1883; the Reverend P. J. Carraway was P. C. for four years 1881-1885. There were eleven adult baptisms and eighty-nine infant baptisms between 1875 and 1883. One of the latter was a 20-month old boy who died the same day; two other infants were marked "dead".

There were four marriages listed for 1881:

Jan. 20 Walter S. Nelson and Alice M. Stewart

Feb. 14 E. T. Wade and Jennie C. Whitfield

July James McNeely and Nancy Robinson

Dec. 23 James McRae and Mary Horn for 1882:

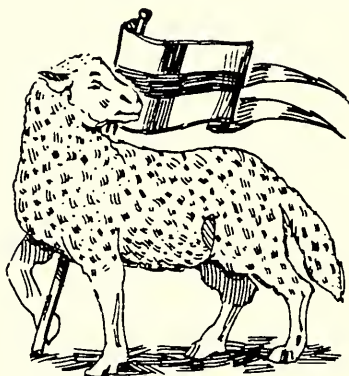
Feb. 9 John C. Futch and Julia E. Stewart

Oct. 23 William Huff and Sue Howie

Nov. 22 Dr. S. L. Montgomery and Cora L. Winchester for 1883:

Oct. 31 Sidi Brown Bundy and Elisabeth A. Stewart

A complete list of the 1871 membership is in the Appendix.





Chapter Three

THE CHURCH'S GRADUAL GROWTH

1871-1874

The Reverend B.F. Dixon arrived at his new station on December 31, 1870, and met with the Board of Stewards that same day. He seemed determined to smooth the waters, a welcome change from his predecessor. In his State of the Church message, he began by apologizing for his delayed arrival and his lack of knowledge about the "condition of the charge". He continued in a conciliatory vein, "I feel however that this is a fine field for usefulness and with the blessing of our common Father, the aid of His Spirit, and the assistance of these brethren, I am determined to do all I can toward the advancement of Christ's Kingdom and the salvation of souls. I feel that my grateful acknowledgments are due and I take this opportunity of tendering them to the brethren for the very kind manner in which I have been received among them."

John H. Walsh reported, as Superintendent of Sunday school, that several families had moved away but "we have efficient teachers and inquiring students." He was glowing in his praise and optimistic in outlook for the future.

Perhaps the Reverend Stafford's criticism about raising money so haphazardly last year had an effect on the way the stewards planned to finance the church in the future. "We Propose to raise the assessments on the station the present year by assessing each, or family, with the amount they should pay and hope by early and continued effort to meet these claims promptly."

By June the Sunday school membership totaled 127, and looked forward to even more prosperous times. Five new members joined during the quarter. Repairs were being made on the church.

The fourth quarterly conference usually had the most complete reports since it was the last of the conference year. The Board met on September 23, 1871, and the pastor gave the good news of "the application of twenty-three persons for church membership and

nearly as many conversions . . . Those who have been weak in the faith have been strengthened and backsliders reclaimed. To God be all the glory."

Two days after Christmas of 1871 the first quarterly conference for the new year was held, the beginning of the Reverend B.F. Dixon's second year as pastor. The Sunday school report was quite positive, membership 130, with 360 volumes in the library. "No material changes since our last report with the exception of changing the hour of holding our school from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M." The afternoon hour prevailed well into the twentieth century. The budget for the new year set \$225 for the pastor's salary, \$5.50 for his travelling expenses, contingencies \$25, \$75 for P.E., and \$3 for sexton. The second quarter reports were about the same.

On October 30, 1872, at the Fourth Quarterly Conference the Reverend Dixon was complimentary about the Sunday school and the state of the church. He already knew he would not return as pastor but looked forward to the future of the Monroe church. The Board of Trustees were instructed to sell the church property and to buy a lot for a new church. First Presbyterian Church was organized on September 26, 1873, so the timing was right for them to buy the building and lot from the Methodists. Their 16 charter members had Dr.S.C. Alexander as their pastor until 1877 and they paid the Methodists \$1300 for the church building. The deed was not exercised until early 1875 after the Methodists had moved two blocks west to their new quarters.

In the April 10, 1873, issue of the *Daily Observer*, Charlotte columnist Joseph P. Caldwell wrote about an overnight trip to Monroe during court week. On the way down he saw "white women plowing oxen . . . a sight which should be seen by nice young men who sit around and 'oh,my' because they can find 'nothing to do.'" He reported that the population was about 500 and "Monroe has about 12 dry goods stores, 4 bar-rooms, churches, school, one hotel, boot and shoe, and wagon and buggy manufactories, etc." Caldwell stated that Monroe was quiet that week though court week is usually pretty rowdy; his description sounded like something out of a western movie. His accomodations at the Union Hotel were more than adequate and of course included meals. The proprietor was Mr. C.Austin, former sheriff, and now mayor of Monroe; Austin also had a wagon shop. The reporter judged the outsanding need for Union County was a railroad to get the farm products to market.

The year 1873 saw a new pastor at Monroe Methodist Episcopal

Church, South, the Reverend T.P. England, who wrote rather discouraging reports. He accused the teachers at the Sunday school of neglecting their duties, and he had harsh criticism for those who did not attend church and prayer meeting regularly. The Reverend England held two monthly meetings (congregational business meetings), the first on March 9, 1873. "After some remarks by the pastor the name of J. H. Presson, against whom charges had been preferred, was called. The committee . . . reported charges sustained & accused unwilling to come to trial whereupon he was expelled." The other monthly meeting of the year was held on November 23, 1873, probably not long before England moved on, hopefully to greener pastures. He summarized "his labors during the year" and lectured the members on reading and circulating religious literature and on attending prayer meeting. At the Fourth Quarterly Conference, his last, on November 26, 1873, he reported, "The condition of the church is not as flattering as we had hoped to see. Yet we think there has been improvement in some respects during the year." The first amount raised for missions, \$4.55, was reported—we do not know how it was used. One of the few formal complaints in the records showed that some parishioners thought the pastor did not visit enough. The building committee reported that they had paid the contractor \$1000 and the work was progressing very well.

The following baptisms were recorded for October 12, 1873.

Lizzie E. DeLorne, daughter of Mary J. DeLorne &

Clifton A. Hinson & Herbert J. Hinson, sons of Jackson & Pocahontas Hinson

Davis Armfield, son of E.A. & Rachel Armfield

And for November 23, 1873:

Robert Franklin Turner, James Cameron Turner, sons & Lydis Alice Turner, daughter of L.A. & Martha M. Turner

Hugh McCombs Houston, David Anderson Houston, sons, & Ellen Fitzhenry Houston, daughter of R.V. & Lessie Houston

Frances Ellen Presson, parents unknown

Anna G. Bickett, Lillian, daughters & Thos. Walter Bickett, son, of Dr. T.W. & Mary Bickett

The new pastor for 1874, the Reverend M.V. Sherrill, saw some optimistic signs and said the congregations were large and very attentive to the preaching of the word. By the Second Quarterly Conference held April 2, 1874, \$2425 had been paid on the new church (most of it was borrowed). The Fourth Quarterly Conference

was held on October 5, 1874, and the spiritual condition of the church was improved partly due to a revival which brought in 26 new members. Stewards named for the upcoming year were: T.D. Winchester, H.J. Wolfe, E.A. Armfield, G.C. McLarty, John C. Sikes, A.F. Stevens, L.A.W. Turner, and G.D. Broom.

FINANCING A NEW CHURCH IN 1873-1874

In our church archives is a collection of papers dated mostly 1873 and 1874. They were given to Faire Funderburk by Page Winchester, a grandson of Thomas D. Winchester.

The oldest slip of paper is a note due to Joseph B. Wolfe dated January 22, 1856, for \$217.62 1/2 "for repairing M.E.Church in the town of Monroe." The note is signed by John P. Houston, Thomas D. Winchester, and H. M. Houston. The back of the paper shows \$47.50 was paid (no date), then \$100 paid July 8, 1862; finally \$194 was paid and it was marked "paid in full" February 4, 1874. The fact that it took 18 years to pay off that debt is a testament to the hard times every one endured around the time of the Civil War.

By the time the note above for repairing the church was paid, the congregation was outgrowing the church and it was decided to build a new church. Accordingly, the first church, building and lot, was sold to the Presbyterian brethren (site of the present First Presbyterian Church, southeast corner of Church and Windsor Streets); the trustees executed the deed on January 30, 1875, after the new church was built on the northwest corner of Hayne and Windsor Streets.

The Reverend John R. Little arrived the fall of 1867, to be pastor for three crucial years. It was about that time that Monroe sent its first delegates to the "District Meeting" (now called the District Conference), held in Wadesboro in August 1867. In 1870 the Fourth Quarterly Conference made the decision to sell the first church and build a new church. A committee was appointed; they were: H. M. Houston, Thomas D. Winchester, and A. F. Stevens. The Reverend W. T. McClellan was the next pastor, assigned for one year, arriving the fall of 1870. Also that year a Sunday School Library was created from which books could be borrowed for outside reading.

The Reverend B. F. Dixon was the pastor for two years, 1872 and 1873. The lot for the new church was purchased on November 18, 1872, from T. D. Winchester. There is a list of pledges for the new church consisting of thirty-six names and the total amount subscribed

is \$1236. The amounts range from \$1 to \$300; most are marked "paid" but there is no date.

On May 28, 1873, F. W. Ahrens was paid ten dollars for plans for the new church building. In the fall of 1873 the Reverend T. P. England arrived for the year during which most of the construction of the new church by J. T. Hart took place. Mr. Hart was paid in installments, the first amount was \$83.28 paid on August 9, 1873, the second of \$100 paid the twenty-fifth of the same month. On September 19, 1873, a large payment of \$800 to J. T. Hart was financed with a note in that amount borrowed from A. F. Stevens; it was re-paid to Mr. Stevens with \$500 on November 24, 1873, and the other \$300 in January, 1874 — apparently no interest was charged. Mr. Hart received \$200 on November 27, 1873, half of which was borrowed from H. M. Houston and half from T. D. Winchester. The final 1873 installment to Mr. Hart was right before Christmas in the amount of \$800. On January 8, 1874, James McCollum graciously loaned the building committee three hundred dollars for only 8% interest. The note was endorsed over to H. M. Houston and it was paid out September 1, 1877, \$300 plus \$119.86 interest. J. T. Hart received \$100 on February 4, and \$500 on February 27, 1874. The last payment, marked "paid in full", on March 14 was \$506.72.

On April 9, 1874, Thomas Holly received \$225 for painting the new church. Some additional painting by W. J. Willoughby cost \$8.00 in early June; we know it took him four days because there is a bill that Chapman Hill charged \$1.35 for four days board for said Mr. Willoughby. Attorney S. H. Walkup was paid two dollars July 3, 1874, for writing the deed of conveyance "for the old church lot to W. H. Fitzgerald and others". In the fall of 1874 the Reverend M. V. Sherrill arrived to be pastor for the first full year in the new church. He signed a receipt on December 18, 1874, for \$135, his rent for the year 1875.

Between February 2 and April 15 of 1874 the building committee was billed for twenty-one construction items from the Bickett, Griffin & McCauley store. The total for all items was \$15.05 with one dollar off for paying cash. Included were paint brushes, turpentine, alcohol, shellac, linseed oil, and six colors of paint. A gallon of turpentine, for instance, was sixty-five cents.



Chapter Four

METHODISM GROWS WITH MONROE

1874-1894

The year 1874 was a momentous one in the life of Monroe Methodist Episcopal Church, South, having a new church building—but no less so for the rest of Monroe. The depression following the Panic of 1873 made life even more difficult for those still reeling from the economic devastation of the post-Civil War period. But the future looked much brighter with the Radicals of Reconstruction weakening in political power, and the long-awaited railroad finally completed. The economic boost of the railroad can hardly be exaggerated, as it opened up far flung markets for the cotton crop. Cotton began as a cash crop around 1810, when farmers began to get away from subsistence farming. After the Civil War farms attempted to be more self-sufficient because there was so little cash money. But the demand for cotton as a raw material, so scarce to factories in the North and in England because of the war, led farmers to plant cotton more and more as a cash crop. The railroad was a convenient and cheap way to get it to far-away markets. Another economic advantage to the railroad was the creation of jobs: in cutting cross ties, in the actual construction, and finally in railroad jobs. The Carolina Central Railroad depot in Monroe opened on November 13, 1874, and within two years the population had increased threefold.

The religious life of Monroe was quite healthy, not just in Methodist circles. In 1874 the Presbyterians bought the old Methodist church lot and building on the southeast corner of Church and Windsor Streets, having organized in 1873; they made improvements on the structure early in 1878. The Baptists planned to build on the Main Street lot (east side) that was given to them (First Baptist was organized in 1852). And St. Paul's Episcopal Church had its organizational meeting on November 14, 1874. The Methodists inadvertently aided the Episcopalians over the years as they expelled or suspended members "for unchristian conduct". That probably referred to dancing, playing

cards, or attending either the theater or the circus. For two weeks in the fall of 1877 a Dancing School operated in Monroe. The newspapers printed the lively debate that ensued. The Episcopalians raised money from time to time by giving "an entertainment"; it would be interesting to know how many Methodists attended those functions.

The new Methodist pastor for the year 1875 was the Reverend C.M. Pepper. At the First Quarterly Conference on January 21, 1875, he decried the small Sunday school but looked for improvement "when we get our stoves up and get fully under way." In March he reported seven new members but there "seems to be a good deal of coldness in the church." By June he recorded improvement. "Peace very generally prevails. The members of the church are nearly all walking orderly so far as I have been informed, and the attendance at church has increased." At the Fourth Quarterly Conference the Reverend Pepper was ecstatic; he could report 27 new members, including W.H. Phifer.

The Monroe Enquirer newspaper has several articles of interest in 1875 editions. An issue in May said the stockholders of Monroe High School elected the following as trustees for twelve months: A. A. Laney, J. D. Stewart, T. D. Winchester, S. H. Walkup, W. H. Fitzgerald, E. A. Armfield and B. F. Houston, with T. D. Winchester as treasurer. These were predominately prominent Methodist laymen. Work on the new building was to begin soon. In a paid advertisement the students, male and female, could prepare for ordinary vocations or for college. The next session was to begin July 28 and last for twenty weeks. Sample prices for tuition: English \$10 to \$16, Languages \$5 each, Higher Mathematics \$5, Music on Piano \$20. John D. Hodges was the principal. One item announced that the organists for the Methodist and Baptist Churches, Mrs Fannie Adams and Professor Certain would give a series of Concerts and Tableaux; the proceeds were to be used for buying music books. The Ordinances of the Town of Monroe for the Year 1875 were interesting. Several prohibited horses or wagons in certain places. The fine for a person who was found lying drunk on the Public Square was one dollar. The fine for willfully destroying the planted shade trees in town was fifty dollars. The fine for allowing one's cellar to become stagnant was one dollar for each day till it was cleaned up; a hog pen or privy was five dollars a day. A fine of five dollars was levied for selling Intoxicating Liquors on the Sabbath day except in case of sickness or to a traveler.

The Reverend Daniel May was assigned to Monroe for the year of 1876. He was strict about "worldliness" and expelled eight members for dancing. He also lectured the church stewards about the finances

of the church and blamed them for not adopting a plan for collecting money to pay the pastor and to pay off the debt of building the new church. His salary was \$800. A nice amount of \$31.20 was collected for the Reverend R.O. Abernathy's school (Rutherford College). The second quarterly conference held on April 12, 1876, was the first time the report started off "Monroe Station, NC Conference, Charlotte District." The stewards for the year 1876 were listed: T. D. Winchester, E. A. Armfield, H. B. Howie, B. D. Heath, H. B. Adams, J. N. Sherrill, and W. H. Phifer. Trustees T. D. Winchester and H. M. Houston reported that the title was good and the church building was valued at \$5000 with an indebtedness of \$1450.

In a curious postscript to the Reverend May's pastorate, there is an entry on the fly leaf of the quarterly conference record book that ends with the last (fourth) quarterly conference on November 20, 1876. It is dated April 26, 1877, and reads: "In the matter of controversy between Rev. D. May and the Board of Stewards of M. E. Church for past year in relation to a sum of money which said Rev. D. May alleges was donated to him by the Sab. school and which was not so appropriated by said Board of Stewards, the same being submitted to arbitration the following arbitrators were chosen: by Rev. D. May, J. D. Stewart & E. Harding; and on part of the Stewards, J. R. Winchester & J. H. Walsh. The fifth man if desired to be selected by committee. Committee began work by calling J. D. Stewart to the chair & J. H. Walsh as secretary." No other reference was found in this matter.

The quarterly conference records are missing from 1877 through 1886, but there is a list of pastors. The Reverend O. J. Brent served for the year 1877. The next three years the Reverend J. H. Guinn stayed through 1880, followed by the Reverend P. J. Carraway for four years through 1884. During the two-year pastorate of the Reverend F. D. Swindell, 1885-1886, a new parsonage was built at 406 West Windsor Street; it served until the third church was built and it was later re-built into the residence of Dr. George Marvin Smith.

The Reverend Ware in his 1897 historical sketch stated that "Brother Guinn was a man of sweet spirit and a fine preacher." He died in 1884 while serving in Rockingham. "Brother Carraway was very popular during his four years' stay in Monroe . . . hearty and full of fun as ever."

On January 10, 1887, the Reverend W. C. Gannon participated in his first quarterly conference at his new church home. The Record book has the questions printed, where previously both questions (as dictated by the general conference) and answers were written out in

long hand, sometimes rather difficult to decipher. The pastor's salary was set at \$900 with the understanding that the interest on the parsonage debt is to be paid out of the allowance; that would be a powerful incentive for the pastor to preach on stewardship. For relief of the poor \$2.16 was given. Brothers T. D. Winchester and W. J. Boylin were appointed as committee to settle parsonage debt with Brother B. D. Heath.

At the third conference for the year 1887, held at the church on July 4, mention was made of the Woman's Missionary Society, also a society of Bright Jewels. The Reverend Gannon reported the Sunday school in good condition, but he added there was no systematic plan of instruction of children. He himself taught the class of 18 adult gentlemen made up of Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists and some who were not members of any church. Gannon commented that the young people came to prayer meeting moreso than the older members. The stewards for the next year were listed in the September 12, 1887, fourth quarterly conference: W. H. Phifer (also Sunday School Superintendent), W. J. Boylin, H. B. Shute, E. A. Armfield, W. E. Wallis, B. D. Heath, T. D. Winchester, H. B. Adams, and A. C. Johnson. The membership stood at 223 members. The Sunday school had 166 scholars and 19 teachers with an expenditure of \$119.55 for the year (\$10 of that was "for our church at Chapel Hill"). None of his reports have anything special in Gannon's second (his last) year.

We do not know when a missionary society for the women was organized at Monroe Methodist. Some papers at Duke University shed some light on the matter conference-wide. In the collection of papers from Lillie Moore Everett (she was from Rockingham) is the description and minutes of the organizational meeting held in Charlotte. At the request of several ladies Dr. A. W. Wilson, missionary secretary called a meeting to organize a conference Woman's Missionary Society. It convened at the Tryon Street Methodist Church, Charlotte, on Sunday, December 1, 1878 at 3 P.M. and elected Mrs. N. H. D. Wilson as the first president. Within a year there were twenty auxiliaries organized with 450 members. Charlotte, Rockingham and Ansonville had societies. The authority to organize for work in missions was granted to the women of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South at the Atlanta General Conference on May 23, 1878. Tradition holds that earlier attempts to organize had been discouraged; ladies attempting to meet found locked doors and had to meet on the steps of churches. The men, who controlled the churches, thought the women should beat home tending to the home fires and the children.

The Reverend Andrew P. Tyler arrived to spend the years 1889 and 1890; his reports were sparse indeed and even sometimes omitted the date. The November 18, 1889, Fourth Quarterly Conference report said the Sunday school was in fine condition. The state of the church report listed 32 baptisms by name. Undoubtedly this dated to the "Lietch meeting. All of the churches in Monroe joined together in a protracted meeting lasting three weeks. The speaker was the Reverend Thomas Leitch of Charleston, SC, and he was a persuasive speaker. The trustees reported at the same November conference that the church building was valued at \$4000 and the parsonage at \$2250. Both were debt-free and in fair condition. The insurance cost \$75 for each (possibly a three-year premium).

The brief and largely uninformative reporting continued through Tyler's second year of 1890, with no entry at all for the fourth quarter, usually the most informative. The May meeting does have an entry under miscellaneous business, after the election of delegates to the Sunday school conference and the resignation of stewards B.D. Heath and W.E. Wallis. "On motion, it was decided to draw in the chancel rail of the church, and allow the ladies the privilege of removing the pulpit and supplying its place with something more suitable." It is probable that the altar table we have, our oldest piece of furniture now on hand, was acquired at that time. An old photograph in the centennial book (1944) looks like that table in the middle of the pulpit with a lectern on it.

Tyler's last reports in July, 1890, praise the work in the Sunday school and, referring to the membership, he states. "They seem to be better planted than formerly." How we wish he had not been so allergic to written reports! He went on to become P.E. of the Charlotte District, then to the Elizabeth District, North Carolina Conference, where surely he did better in his paper work.

In 1890 the western part of North Carolina was separated from the North Carolina Conference to become the Western North Carolina Conference. Monroe and Union County were, of course, in the western part, still in the Charlotte District. The first quarterly conference report reflecting the change in the conference name is for the first meeting of the 1891 year.

The Reverend J. C. Rowe arrived for his first pastorate at Monroe Methodist on December 1, 1890, for a two-year stay, and he reportedly was a very fine preacher. His report to the first Quarterly Conference held on March 2, 1891, has the statistics a historian loves (statistics that have too often been missing). All amounts pledged for the previous

year were paid, and one was overpaid: conference claimants was overpaid by sixty-six cents, paid \$70.66. The pastor was paid \$1000; the Presiding Elder paid \$135; \$19 to the bishop; \$85 for domestic missions; \$145 for foreign missions; \$55 for church extension; and \$48 for education. The pastor's salary for 1891 was the same, \$1000, plus use of the parsonage. The other amounts were increased slightly but church extension and education remained the same. The amount raised for the support of the ministry so far in 1891 was \$131.30, of which \$24 was paid to the Presiding Elder and the rest to the Reverend Rowe. Rowe reported the Sunday school well organized and doing good work under the direction of Brother W. H. Phifer.

On May 25, 1891, the second Quarterly Conference was held, with \$4.05 collected for relief of the poor, \$27 for incidental expenses, \$102.50 for other purposes, and \$248.95 for support of the ministry. On Education, Rowe reported, "Our people are taking a lively interest in Education and sending their children to school as much as possible. At this time special interest is manifested in Educational work as the people of the town have but recently united and raised \$6000 for the erection of a new high school building." In other reports, the Sunday school attendance was so large that space was a problem, and fifteen new members had been added to the membership.

At the third Quarterly Conference held on July 13, 1891, the major news was that the time for Sunday school had been changed two weeks earlier from afternoon to morning. By the fourth conference held on November 2 the attendance had decreased so much that the hour was changed back to afternoon. Also reported was the total amount raised for the year as \$2224.45, plus \$100.93 in Sunday school. For the first time in many years membership statistics were given. The total membership stood at 347 white members, net increase given as 16, so the membership at the end of 1890 must have been 331. The value of the church building was \$4000. Professor Henry W. Spinks, one of the stewards, died in September and was memorialized with a Resolution of Respect. Church officers for the coming year were listed:

Trustees: G. D. Broom, H. M. Houston, W. H. Phifer, T. D. Winchester, G. C. McLarty, H. B. Adams, C. W. Bruner

Stewards: W. H. Phifer, W. C. Wolfe, H. B. Howie, A. C. Johnson, T. D. Winchester, H. B. Shute, C. W. Bruner, S. W. Parham, J. W. Stephenson, W. J. Boylin, J. W. Ashcraft, A. J. Hargett

Sunday School Superintendent: W. H. Phifer

District Steward: W. C. Wolfe

Recording Secretary: W. J. Boylin

Class Leaders: T. L. A. Helms, L. D. Andrews, J. W. Whitfield

The Reverend Rowe's second year passed uneventfully with an increase in membership to 379, other statistics about the same. At the first conference on January 4, 1892, the sexton was given a raise in salary to \$5 a month. Rowe described the spiritual condition as good; his State of the Church reports were mostly lists of new members, baptisms, and lost members. The only changes in officers for the upcoming year of 1893 were the addition of W. B. Houston and S. B. Bundy as stewards and the substitution of H. B. Howie as class leader instead of Helms.

The Reverend W. R. Barnett arrived on December 5, 1892, for a one year's stay. He found the spiritual condition of the church unsatisfactory, but some members were committed. His reports also include Report on Missions and on Education. Missionary education was being stressed, and there were four young people in church schools (probably colleges) and a number in Monroe High School. At the end of the year in November the membership stood at 369, and the total amount raised for the year was \$1865, plus \$82.68 for Sunday school. An auxiliary to the Woman's Missionary Society had been formed and the Juvenile Missionary Society had taken on new life.

The Reverend R. M. Hoyle arrived in Monroe on December 5, 1893, for a year's stay—he was to return for a second pastorate later. He was a rigid disciplinarian with a unique preaching style. In his brief State of the Church message to the first Quarterly Conference January 17, 1894, the five members removed by certificate were all Barnetts, undoubtedly the outgoing pastor's family, and four of the six new members were named Hoyle, obviously the Reverend Hoyle's family. He thought the condition of the church hopeful. At the second conference the Reverend Hoyle's Report on the General State of the Church, dated April 2, 1894, had more specific criticism. Hoyle wrote: "Our congregation is improving but it is still less than the membership of the church. We have four class meetings attended by a few of the most spiritually minded of the church; the majority of the members show no interest in the social meetings. We need a revival but our Army must be drilled if we expect victory; but this, it seems, cannot be done. The pastor cannot persuade the people to sit near the front of the church nor kneel for prayer. So he must preach to the church scattered over the house and pray (with) the congregation staring him in the face; and this destroys the effect of the service. I have never seen such indifference and I think it means death. We must wake up if we would be instrumental in the conversion of the world,

or if we would have our children saved. We must awake from this lethargy if we expect to get to Heaven." He named eleven members who were removed by certificate and those expelled were: Charlie Cadieu, George Presley, H. B. Adams, Sr., Walter S. Nelson and J. B. Tucker. His report continued, "We have had a stormy quarter; but we pray the Lord to heal and bless, and we hope to find it better further on."

By July Hoyle noted some improvement, but the Sunday school was having trouble getting enough teachers. The November 21 fourth Quarterly Conference reports were the final ones for Hoyle's stormy year. The Sunday school report wished for the congregation's cooperation in finding teachers and improving attendance. First mention was made of an Epworth League with 68 members. Hoyle could report six new members and twenty-one infants baptized. He said the congregations were not as large but were more attentive and spiritual. The finances were not completely settled until the last minute. Total membership stood at 340.



Winchester home used as parsonage from 1897 to 1921. Was later moved to Beasley St., then torn down in 1960's.



Chapter Five

MOMENTOUS CHANGES

1895-1905

The Reverend W.R. Ware was first appointed to the Monroe church on December 13, 1894. One wonders if he or the congregation were ready for the busy ten years till the beginning of his second pastorate. He served three years each time. His first reports to the quarterly conference were optimistic and hopeful, stressing attendance. By April 1, 1895, the Sunday school was expanding to include one at the Cotton Factory, J. T. Bishop and wife were in charge. One death, four removals, and twenty-eight new members were recorded. The spiritual condition was pronounced good and attendance also, except for Wednesday night prayer meeting. Collections for missions were taken at Sunday school the first Sunday of each month. In addition \$35 was raised when the congregation observed "Do Without Week." The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society and the Light Bearers were active. Three church members had been elected to the local Board of Education: L. D., Andrews, R. B. Redwine, and W. C. Wolfe. One of the young men was attending Trinity College and a young lady was at Asheville College. The people at the Cotton Factory requested the conference to consider building a chapel on donated land, presumably under the direction of the Monroe church. The matter was debated and a committee of five appointed to study the proposal.

The April 1 conference was to be the last for Thomas Didymus Winchester, as he died suddenly at his home on Sunday afternoon July 21, 1895, at age 74. His contributions of time, money, and faithfulness to Methodism in Monroe will probably never be equalled. From the formation of a "society" resulting from the Reverend McSwain's preaching on the sills of Winchester's store through over 50 years of church history, T. D. Winchester was a towering influence for good. He was born into the Methodist faith in the Pleasant Grove section of the county. His store across the street from the courthouse in Monroe was one of the first buildings in the backwoods that became the county seat in 1844. Issues of the *Monroe Enquirer* dated 1875 tell that he was elected a trustee by the stockholders of Monroe High School,

he was on the Board of Directors of Peoples Bank, and he was Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners. At his death his wife, the former Elizabeth Jane Stitt whom he married November 12, 1846, survived with four of their nine children. A moving Tribute of Respect was adopted by the third Quarterly Conference when it met on September 2, 1895. The tribute appears in the Appendix. How appropriate that Winchester's homeplace was to become the site of the third church building for the Methodists in Monroe.

H. B. Adams was elected to replace Winchester as trustee at the September conference. The Sunday school report bemoaned the irregular attendance of the teachers, due to the hot weather and a protracted meeting (revival) in the next county. The Epworth League disbanded after trying to reorganize under the new constitution. The Cotton Factory Sunday school was discontinued because the Presbyterians built and staffed a chapel there. New song books were bought for \$34 for the Sunday school. The State of the Church report listed twenty-six new members but two deaths and ten members lost to the Presbyterians. Other business included the above-mentioned tribute and the approval of a quit claim deed for the Presbyterian Church, as their 1873 deed buying the lot from the Methodists had been lost.

October 28, 1895, saw the fourth conference of the year and had some statistics. Membership stood at 387, with 150 scholars in Sunday school. The pastor's salary remained at \$1000, with a total of \$2093.90 raised for all purposes. The Sunday school was still plagued by irregular attendance of teachers but the state of the church was more hopeful. Only three names had been removed with nine new members and seven children baptized. A "gracious meeting" (revival) conducted by the Reverend T. M. Shamburger was in progress at the time and twelve conversions at least were expected to result. The Missions report was optimistic with the Women's, the Juvenile, and the Young People's Missionary Societies at work. Stewards for the next year were to be: W. H. Phiifer, W. D. Wolfe, J. W. Stephenson, S. W. Parham, C. W. Bruner, H. B. Shute, W. B. Houston, James McNeely, H. M. Broom, and George S. Lee.

The new year 1896 saw the reports continue in the same vein as the previous year. At the May meeting a committee was formed to solicit subscriptions for a new church building. Only nine years later the new church was built, occupied and paid for—it was dedicated on May 28, 1905. The church was also reaching out and by November had already subscribed the amount necessary for a new church (30 by 50 feet) near the Monroe Cotton Mills, the lot already obtained. In

addition the church agreed to give \$200 a year for a pastor for this new venture; the balance was expected from the mill owners. An April revival (19th to 30th) was a blessing to the congregation, and eighteen new members joined that quarter. By year's end the Sunday school was improved; it was paying tuition for a student at Monroe High School (so was the congregation). A representative from Trinity College preached in March and the collection for the school was \$15.

The Reverend Ware's last year, 1897, was eventful and forward-looking. The Reverend W. M. Robbins was listed as assistant, probably at North Monroe. The new chapel was built near the cotton mill and named North Monroe Methodist. Request was made to the charge conference to change the name of the parent church to Central Methodist; the name was used on reports beginning December, 1897. A building committee was appointed: B. F. Houston, James H. Lee, W. C. Heath, John R. English, S. W. Parham, C. W. Bruner and W. C. Wolfe. At the third conference held July 12, 1897, the trustees were authorized to deed the West Windsor St. parsonage and \$2500 to Mrs. T.D. Winchester in exchange for the Winchester homeplace. The homeplace was the block bounded by Hayne, Windsor, Beasley and Morgan Streets. The Winchester house was to serve as the parsonage. It was moved down Windsor St. on the lot to make room for the church building; George S. Lee was in charge and completed the renovations on the "new" parsonage by the end of March, 1898, at a cost of \$650. The reports each quarter showed new members to report, including 56 for July. The Missions reports continued bright; meetings and literature were being shared with the county home and the jail. At year's end the membership stood at 473, the pastor's salary at \$1200 (probably it was \$1000 for Ware and \$200 for Robbins), and the total amount raised was \$3654.05. Pastor Ware left the church in good shape for his successor, Dr. J. J. Renn.

For the one year of 1898 that he stayed, the Reverend Dr. Renn continued the good work, with a revival in February, 1898; he added 34 new members in the March report but 17 had moved their membership, ten new in June, then 19 more new by November. North Monroe continued to grow in spite of competition from the Baptists. A summer revival resulted in seven new members. The Sunday school membership at North Monroe was larger than the church's and all that was needed were an organist and more teachers. The Missions report stated there were 113 members at Central in the four societies (Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, Woman's Parsonage and Home Missionary Society, Young People's Missionary Society, and the Juve-

nile Society called the Light Bearers); they raised \$234.63 during the year for Korea and Mexico and some of the church-related schools. The education report was that the congregation's children patronized the local schools and there was good support for Methodist colleges. Year-end statistics were not given for the November 4, 1898, conference that marked the end of Renn's pastorate.

The Reverend W.M Bagby's appointment to Monroe on November 22, 1898, marked the beginning of four intense years. He seemed to be a dedicated, organized pastor, well liked by the congregation. The trustees had expanded to seven: G. D. Broom, H. M. Houston, W. B. Houston (also a steward), James H. Lee, N. B. Adams (also Sunday school superintendent at North Monroe), C. W. Bruner, and W. H. Phifer. Phifer was also Sunday school superintendent, class leader, district steward, and chairman and treasurer of the Board of Stewards. Other stewards were S. W. Parham, H. B. Shute, W. B. Houston, A. C. Johnson, G. S. Lee, R. D. Crow, James McNeely, W. S. Lee, W. C. McGinnis, W. N. Walsh, C. M. Broom, W. D. Pemberton, J. D. McRae, and W. C. Wolfe (recording steward, resigned and replaced in March by W. B. Houston). Class leaders were S. D. Andrews, H. B. Howie, F. W. Whitfield, and Phifer. F. Ed Stewart was secretary of the church conference. Statistics were recorded at the first quarterly conference held January 23, 1899. The membership had increased by 41 to 514 (of course this included North Monroe). The total amount collected the previous year was \$3591.08. The pastor's salary was \$1000, with \$300 for the assistant for North Monroe. The amount expended for churches and parsonage for the year before was \$642.75, probably mostly for work on the parsonage. There was a \$17.26 donation to Oxford Orphanage and regular contributions after that; the new pastor must have lifted that up to the congregation as a worthy cause. The amount collected for ministerial support that quarter was \$192.30 at Central and \$2.80 at North Monroe, so the new church near the mill was not ready to be self-sufficient. There were nine new members, five of them were Bagbys; those dismissed were two Hudsons and six of the former pastor Renn's family. The new pastor Bagby regretted that there was no Epworth League and set himself determined to rectify the omission. He found the spiritual state of the church good and "the material interests of the church are in the hands of wise and aggressive men and we are expecting forward movement on their line." In all his reports Bagby was optimistic and pleased with what he found at his new parish. The death of Elizabeth J. Winchester (widow of T. D. Winchester) was noted—"the oldest and one of the best

members of the charge passed from labor into rest on November the 30, 1898. She gave the most satisfying testimony that all was well with her before she passed away."

Membership steadily increased. Three new in March and the seven dismissed were all named Miller. The July report had twenty-nine new members following a "good meeting"; they also paid off the \$2000 owed on the lot for the new church. The October (fourth) conference welcomed eight new members, two dismissed, and Wilson Ashcraft was withdrawn under censure. During the year 1899 they paid \$39 for an organ at North Monroe and \$70 for a piano. Membership was at 546 at the beginning of 1900, an increase of 32.

By February 1900, the Epworth League was formed with 30 members. The first year went fine, but in January 1901, the report said the work was uneven and it was reorganized. June saw it not in a healthy condition and by August 1901, it had disbanded. The reorganized Sunday school curriculum, early 1900, included a catechism for the primary classes. The other children memorized the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Apostles Creed. "The children attend three o'clock preaching." The Sunday school report was always optimistic, occasionally bemoaning the irregular attendance of the teachers. By January 1901, there were 217 enrolled at Central in 21 Sunday school classes. The pastor was uniformly pleased with the four missionary societies and the commitment to education.

At the beginning of 1900 statistics were given for the previous year. The church was in a healthy financial condition. All amounts assigned were paid with the preacher's salary overpaid by \$26.26. Amounts paid were:

Presiding Elder	\$155
Foreign Missions	\$218
Preacher in charge	\$1326.26
Domestic Missions	\$123
Bishops	\$28
Church Extension	\$58
Conf. Claimants	\$76
Education	\$82
Woman's Foreign Missionary Society	\$199.33
All other objects	\$2820.98

The latter amount included paying the last \$2000 on the lot for the new church. Oxford Orphanage received \$23.50; relief of the poor, \$6.

The recent annual conference, November, 1899, transferred North Monroe to Monroe Circuit, so there was no assistant preacher. The

Sunday school and other reports included only Central. The decrease in church enrollment was reflected in the next set of statistics, down to 400 on roll in January, 1901.

"The new church enterprise shows some signs of life," Bagby wrote in March, 1899. By October it was making progress slowly. On the building committee W.S. Lee had replaced W.C. Wolfe, and J.J. Crow was added in the spring of 1900. Also the trustees were authorized to sell the old church in May, 1900, and apply the proceeds to the new church. That second church building had a distinctive modified onion-shaped dome; it was later moved west of Main Street and used as a Negro theater. In June, 1901, Bagby wrote, "The new church building is progressing slowly. A systematic, persistent, and earnest effort should be made to raise money for this purpose." The trustees were authorized to borrow up to \$7000 for the new church in August of that year. By the fourth quarterly conference in November, 1901, the "gratifying progress in our new church" led to a resolution, unanimously adopted, to invite the annual conference to meet at the new church in Monroe in November, 1902.

A protracted meeting over two weeks long in the spring of 1901 helped to enlarge the enrollment that year so that there was a net increase of 34 for the year. The Reverend Dr. J.C. Rowe was the revival speaker (and former pastor), also the Presiding Elder for the Charlotte District (of which Monroe was a part) for 1901, 1902, and 1903. He was evidently well-remembered and liked from his two-year pastorate in 1891 and 1892 in Monroe. When he finished his three years as presiding elder, he returned to Central for another year as its pastor. One sad note for 1901 was the death of H.M. Houston, long a devoted steward and trustee. D.A. Houston replaced him as trustee.

No special reports at the June 3, 1902, quarterly conference indicate the impending move into the new church. The crowded Sunday school was looking forward to the move. The July report said the Sunday school was taking some time for the reorganization in the new quarters. In the state of the church: "We are congratulating ourselves over the fact that we are now worshipping in our most elegant new church and we are praying that many souls may be born into His Kingdom here."

"Elegant" was the word for the new church building, even as it was demolished sixty-seven years later. Precious is its memory for all who are fortunate enough to remember it. The first brick was laid by John R. English on June 21, 1900, and the cornerstone was ceremoniously installed on August 1, 1900. Its design, planned by Hayden, Wheeler

& Schwend of Charlotte, was executed by expert craftsmen. The brickwork was by Ingram & Green of Charlotte, the wood work by Hallman & Tyndell of Columbia, SC. McCausland & Co. of Charlotte put on the slate roof. The church was built of red pressed brick trimmed with granite. The interior was beautiful and worshipful with wainscoting and massive handsome hand-carved oak seats, expensive carpeting, and rich pulpit furnishings. The ceiling was steel and the walls were frescoed. The memorial windows were colorful and much admired. There were 260 electric lights on the ceiling with frosted globes so that there were no shadows anywhere in the sanctuary. The wainscoting and flooring were done by Hickory Manufacturing Company, the ceiling painted by Con Oatley of Atlanta, and the frescoing was by W. E. Shiver of Durham. The latter was a real artist, and many remember the beautiful cherubs above the choir loft; but Mr. Shiver was said to have been an alcoholic and it was a full-time job to keep him working and out of jail. One unique feature of the sanctuary was its fan-shaped design where the floor sloped down to the pulpit area, allowing an unobstructed view from any seat. The building cost about \$20,000 plus the cost of the land; the debt remaining was about \$7000. The furnace was in the basement. The seating capacity was about 1200; there were noiseless lifting doors which could add the Sunday school room at the back, the ladies parlor and the pastor's study to the sanctuary area.

In the 1897 *Historical Sketch* by the Reverend W. R. Ware and included with a directory published in 1907, Ware wrote, "The noble women, with willing hands and hearts devoted, wrought well and tastefully. Their handsome parlor with its splendid furniture, the carpets throughout the church, tiling in vestibules, cement walks, the lights and many other tasteful finishings, show the labor of their hands and the devotion of their hearts. To these various purposes \$1000 or more was contributed by the ladies and children of the congregation and Sunday school through the Aid Society."

The consecration services started on Friday night, July 4, 1902, opened by the Reverend Dr. Rowe, Presiding Elder; addresses were made by the Reverend Dr. A. M. Croxton, pastor of First Baptist Church, and the Reverend H. M. Dixon, pastor of First Presbyterian Church. On Saturday morning Bishop A. W. Wilson of Baltimore spoke at an eleven o'clock service. The previous pastor the Reverend W. R. Ware (then at Centenary in Winston) preached. All the other downtown churches were closed Sunday so their members could go to the new Methodist church. Sunday services began with a Love Feast at

the 10 o'clock hour, conducted by the Reverend Dr. John R. Brooks, the Reverend W. R. Ware and the Reverend B. F. Fincher. John Francis Laney, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Laney, was baptized by Bishop Wilson. Wilson preached at the 11 o'clock service on "Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles", taking his text from the first half of the Book of Acts.

There was a mass meeting of the Sunday school classes at 4:30 p.m. Sunday, addressed by the Reverends Bagby, Ware, and Brooks. The bishop preached again Sunday night on the subject of faith. The Methodists were noted for their good music and it was exceptionally fine during these services. There were three organists: Misses Carrie and Lucy Stewart and Mrs. H. R. Laney. The choir was composed of the following singers: Mrs. J. F. Laney, Mrs. J. W. Yates, Misses Kate Laney, Mary Davis, Mary and Belle Andrews and Lena Ogburn; and Messrs. J. F. Laney, C. B. Laney, N. S. Ogburn, H. R. Laney, Pickett McLarty, and Glenn Wolfe. The ushers were J. H. Lee, Pickett McLarty, Frank Lowe, Walter Laney, Wriston Lee, D. A. Houston, W. B. Houston, and J. J. Crow. There were long articles in the local newspapers and in the *Charlotte Observer* about the beautiful building and the services.

Thus the Reverend Mr. Bagby concluded his four-year tenure with the congregation in its fine new church; there was the debt of \$7000 but the property was worth \$30,000. As planned, the annual conference met in Monroe on November 11, 1902. Bishop A. Coke Smith was the presiding bishop of the conference. It is a shame we do not have adequate records of this event. In fact, the quarterly conference book for the next four years, 1903-1906, is missing. We do know that the new pastor assigned to Central at that fall, 1902, Annual Conference was the Reverend M. A. Smith; he stayed two years.

We do know that the beloved former pastor the Reverend Dr. J. C. Rowe left his position as Presiding Elder of the Charlotte District to come back to Central for a second pastorate in the fall of 1904. He stayed two years and, with a membership of 546, the church debt of \$7000 was liquidated. Thus the church was dedicated in a week-end of services the end of May 1905. Bishop H. C. Morrison, D.D., of New Orleans preached three fine sermons and "solemnly and in due form set it apart for the worship of Almighty God." Assisting in the services May 27-28 were the following pastors and presiding elders: the Reverends J. S. Nelson, J. Ed. Thompson, J. A. B. Fry, L. A. Falls, J. A. Baldwin, R. H. Broome and John R. Brooks. Pastors Ware, Bagby, and Rowe were given most of the credit for the accomplishment of this milestone in the history of Central Church.



Chapter Six

MISSIONARY SPIRIT

1905-1918

With the debt on the new church paid, Central could begin to be concerned for the needs of others. Though the quarterly conference records were lost for the four years 1903-1906, inclusive, other sources give us some information. At the end of 1904, the end of Dr. Rowe's one year, the Reverend W. R. Ware returned to serve Central for three more years. Under the guidance of Mr. Ware, on December 17, 1905, a Men's missionary Society was formed, with J. J. Crow as president. By March, 1907, \$400 had been pledged and sent to the Board of Missions. The missionary chosen for Central to support was the Reverend J. Robert Moose in Korea. While on leave in the summer of 1907, Moose, his wife, and three little girls visited Central. A special collection amounted to \$157. They made an indelible impression on the congregation. The report noted they sailed from San Francisco on August 8.

In March, 1907, there was a vote to continue work at Icemorlee and try to buy a building to be used for a church. The missionary societies were such an integral part of the church that their work was seldom highlighted. Just a passing reference that "the missions spirit is alive and well."

Sometimes statistics were given. In March, 1907, there were 116 in the Womans Foreign Missionary Society with the Young People's Society and the Light Bearers as auxiliaries; most of the women must have belonged since the membership of the whole church was only 512. One of the few times complete statistics for Missions were given was at the fourth quarterly conference in November, 1910. The Foreign Society had collected \$118.85 in the previous eight months. The Young Peoples Missionary Society had 27 members and collected \$136.33. The eighty-five members of the Light Bearers collected \$75. Twenty-eight ladies in the Woman's Home Mission Society collected \$131.54; they were also responsible for the parsonage.

The officials for the years 1907 and 1908 were the same. W. H. Phifer was Sunday school superintendent, and chairman of the official board, and chairman of the trustees. Other trustees were: G. D. Broom,

W. B. Houston, H. B. Adams, C. W. Bruner, James H. Lee, and D. A. Houston. J. A. Bivens was church conference secretary, and G. D. Broom was Sunday school secretary. W. B. Houston was secretary to the official board and W. S. Blakeney was treasurer. Other stewards were: A. C. Johnson, George S. Lee, James McNeely, R. D. Crow, R. B. Redwine, H. B. Adams, J. D. McRae, D. A. Houston, James E. Stack, Will S. Lee, Davis Armfield, H. B. Shute, J. D. Faulkner, L. C. Bickett, and S. H. Green.

Since finances can represent growth, the annual reports to the first quarterly conference for the previous year are interesting. For the years 1906, 1907, 1908, and 1909, these figures represent the progress made. The pastor's salary was \$1440, then \$1500, then \$1700, and \$2000. The amount for the presiding elder went from \$148 to \$158 then to \$250. The total amount raised increased from \$4032.43 to \$4556.52 to \$4829.81 and finally reached \$4992.67. Someone, probably the pastor, figured the amount per member in 1908 was \$9.27.

The third quarterly conference in June, 1907, had two interesting reports. One was the reception of 58 new members, mostly as a result of a 12-day protracted meeting which began April 27 and was conducted by the Reverend D.H. Comann. Also reported was the acceptance of a petition from Grace Chapel Protestant Methodist Church (on Ridge Road near Concord Road); they wanted to become part of The Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The petition was signed by 22 members at Grace Chapel (the names were Parham, Baucom, Secrest, Price, Foard, 9 named Fowler, 6 named Helms, and 2 named Simpson). The conference voted to accept the proposition when all ecclesiastical and legal duties were ratified by the membership of Grace Chapel.

Also in June, 1907, the Education report listed 14 members in colleges. In September \$141.95 had been sent to Davenport College. Education was often stressed, mentioning the public schools as well as Methodist colleges.

The Sunday school remained in a healthy condition and the attendance was usually around 200, with about 20 teachers. September, 1907, mentioned that attendance had been down due to summer vacations and scarlet fever. A high water mark was reached at Sunday school on December 6, 1908, when attendance was 250.

The church was in good condition in late 1907 when Brother Ware, after serving his second 3-year pastorate in Monroe, left. The new preacher was the Reverend H. F. Chreitzberg. His attention to detail, especially to the accuracy of the church roll, resulted in some lengthy

reports. He did not mince words in his criticism of his predecessor on that account. At the first quarterly conference on January 20, 1908, he said the report to the last annual conference "is incorrect and that to a serious, and seemingly an impardonable, extent." He went into detail, name by name, to correct the errors, then again in November to the fourth quarterly conference. The "members present" at the January, 1908, meeting included women for the first time ("Sisters J. F. Laney and Mrs. Virginia Davis"); also the Reverend A. Walter Moten, pastor of North Monroe-Icemorlee. At his first quarterly conference Chreitzberg also had a long lecture to the church officials. He requested of the Official Board "that they stand by me in church service, the prayer meeting, the Sunday school — or let me put someone in the place of any who cannot or will not do so...Every steward...be on hand at all regular and special meetings that the affairs of God's Home should be carried on punctually and aggressively. This is as little as I can ask and it is the least that the official can consent to give."

At the second (April) quarterly conference the Sunday school report was short, "going on as usual." Also "A commodium soon under the church building is being made for the infant department." Then "Needed changes are being made and others will follow." One wonders if that had anything to do with the resignation of W.H. Phifer as Sunday school superintendent after thirty years in that post; a tribute to his long years of service in that post was included with the fourth quarterly reports at the November meeting. He continued as chairman of the trustees and a steward (also district steward). Evidently "Uncle Billy" Phifer was a hard act to follow; J.A. Bivens was appointed the new superintendent for the Sunday school. The Sunday school was still doing fine. But by May, 1909, Archie Lee was the new superintendent, to be replaced by C. E. Phillips by February, 1910.

Since the reports from the July, 1908, third quarterly conference are missing, the next ones (November) are quite lengthy. Again the detailed correction of the roll was stressed with not-so-subtle criticism of the Reverend Chreitzberg's predecessor. The December, 1908, membership stood at 510. For the new year of 1909 there were the same seven trustees. Some changes in the board of stewards (they had been the same for two years) replaced the following five: W.B. Houston, A. C. Johnson, James McNeely, R. B. Redwine, and James E. Stack. The five new stewards were: John R. English, W. O. Kochtitzky, J. Ed Stewart, W. B. Love, and L. N. Presson. Otherwise 1909 continued

reports in the same vein. One of the fifteen new members reported at the May meeting was Blanche Howie (later Mrs. Claude Benton), our present Historian Emeritus. The fourth quarterly conference was held quite early (September 27) and reported nine more new members. W.B. Love was elected Lay Leader, the first in that office. Missions statistics had a total of 153 members in the four societies collecting a total of \$568.60.

For the upcoming year of 1910 the stewards remained the same except that D.A. Houston was replaced by J. F. Laney. The membership remained the same, at 510. Song books costing \$92.57 were purchased in February. No particular reports at the April conference (with only nine present), nor at the July meeting where only six were present. A pipe organ was purchased the latter part of the year. A very sad note near the end of the conference year — Dr. Chreitzberg died at the parsonage on October 10, 1910. Appropriate memorial tributes were adopted and the local newspaper article was included in the record book.

At the twenty-first session of the Western North Carolina Annual Conference a memoir (obituary) for the Reverend Dr. Hilliard F. Chreitzberg was written by the Reverend Dr. J. H. Weaver. The deceased was born in Georgetown, SC, on February 24, 1850. His father was a prominent Methodist preacher in the South Carolina Conference and wrote a definitive history of South Carolina Methodism. The younger Chreitzberg was graduated from Wofford College in 1873 and received his M. A. degree there three years later. In 1873 he married Miss Addria Kirby, of Spartanburg, who survived him. Five children also survived him, two sons and three daughters. He joined the SC Conference in 1873 and served as Secretary to the SC Annual Conference for six consecutive years beginning in 1887. He served several charges in South Carolina before transferring to the Western North Carolina Conference in 1892.

The new preacher assigned for the 1911 conference year was the Reverend Dr. J. H. Weaver, father of C. C. Weaver, who was assigned to Central ten years later. The elder Weaver was well loved and usually was most positive and optimistic in his reports. His first three conference reports were written on his church stationery, so he probably expected to stay awhile. We assume he moved to Monroe the end of November; by the first conference on January 2, 1911, he had already visited 160 families! He also reported 20 new members, then 22 more in March. By October he reported to the fourth quarterly conference a total of 125 new members for the year, 50 by profession of

faith. The total membership was 614. The Sunday school had its largest attendance ever, 317, in March. At the October conference W.B. Love was listed as Sunday school superintendent, and M. K. Lee was a new trustee. The stewards had expanded to 21; new names were: Dr. J. E. Ashcraft, Eugene Ashcraft, D. P. McLarty, W. B. Brown, T. J. Gordon. J. E. Efird, T. J. Payne. and R. B. Hill. Two former stewards had died: Davis Armfield and A. C. Johnson. The pastor's salary was now \$2000 and the total amount raised was \$7160.70. The 47 members of the Home Missionary Society raised \$267.65, and the 222 members of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society raised \$654.18.

Weaver's second year continued on the same positive note. At the second quarterly conference held May 6, 1912, the Missions report contained the following: "The stewards at our last meeting decided to submit to the congregation the proposition of the support of the Reverend N. S. Ogburn Jr. when he shall go to the foreign field." It was subsequently adopted. At the July conference Rev. J. E. Abernathy was paid \$96.88; he must have been the preacher at the "good meeting" referred to in the state of the church report. (Abernathy was to be the next pastor at Central, succeeding Dr. Weaver.) The Sunday school hour was changed from afternoon to morning; attendance dropped off for a while. New stewards listed at the fourth quarterly conference were Sam Phifer and Wriston Lee. Total membership was 644; the total amount raised was \$6081.06.

At the beginning of the Reverend Dr. Weaver's third year a new trustee, R. B. Redwine, replaced the deceased G. D. Broom. In April, 1913, the largest attendance ever at Sunday school was reached — 337. On missions: "A new Society has been organized among our young girls. We are now raising money to support the Reverend Sneed Ogburn in Japan and will succeed." Then in July: "We have about raised enough money to support our special missionary." Another trustee, C. W. Bruner, had died and was replaced by J. J. Crow. The fourth quarter named the stewards for 1914, including these new names: Lee Griffin, A. M. Stack, and H. A. Shute.

At the beginning of Dr. Weaver's last year, 1914, Central had 650 members — by the end of the year it would be 668. The first quarterly conference was usually held in January but the 1914 was not until March 26. Four church members had died, including the wife of the Reverend Dr. Weaver. The reports continued in the same vein. The November conference listed stewards for the new year including N. S. Ogburn (father of the missionary) and W. M. Gordon.

Blanche Benton remembers Dr. and Mrs. J. H. Weaver well. Dr.

Weaver had the saintliest presence. One little boy was playing outdoors on Hayne Street and came running in the house to tell his mother, "God just passed by!" His mother went to the door and looked down the street to see Dr. Weaver. Mrs. Weaver had a lingering illness, and Blanche ran errands for her. The congregation was so supportive of the Weavers during the time of her illness and death that their son, the Reverend Dr. C. C. Weaver, asked to be assigned to Central Church several years later. He too was much beloved.

The records are missing for the next few years. The Reverend J. H. Weaver was followed by the Reverend J. E. Abernathy in the fall of 1914 — he remained for four years. It would be interesting to read of the effect on the church of the war developments. The Reverend Mr. Abernathy was very nice looking and a brilliant speaker, some say the best preacher yet. He came to preaching late; when he married he was in business and decided to go into the ministry. His wife admitted that she would not have married him if she had known he was to become a preacher. Abernathy was followed by the Reverend J. W. Moore for two years.





Chapter Seven

EXPANSION OF THE 1902 CHURCH

1919-1923

The next records available are Board of Stewards minutes for their monthly meetings beginning with November 10, 1919, the beginning of the conference year. The Reverend John W. Moore was pastor and the officers for the board were elected (we do not have a complete list of the Board of Stewards). The officials were: R.W. Allen, chairman; L.N. Presson, vice chairman; J.W. Love, secretary. Before the election of J.W. Lathan as treasurer, it was voted to pay him \$100 per year. There was some discussion of the best way to get subscriptions (pledges) and then how to get the members to pay regularly. Evidently the method used was for a committee to make a list of assessments for each family and then personal visits followed to see if members accepted the assessments. The board also decided to get out a church directory with the names of the pastor, officers and committees. The property committee was instructed to build some bookcases for the pastor.

At a called meeting two weeks later (to review the pledges), the board voted to increase the pastor's salary to \$3000, to be paid monthly. Also discussed was the effort to buy a house to serve as the parsonage for the pastor at North Monroe-Icemorlee churches. Repairs on the organ were to be paid. At the regular meeting on January 11, 1920, the board decided one way to encourage members to keep up with regular financial support was to post monthly a "roll of honor" of the members who were paid up. A protracted meeting was planned for early spring and the preacher asked for, and received, permission to invite a Mr. Stentz to have charge of the music.

It was during the period 1919-1921 that plans were made and carried out to build the educational building (called the Sunday school building) and to erect a brick parsonage on the southeast corner of the block after moving the Winchester house/parsonage across Beasley Street. The first mention of this major undertaking in

the 1919-1923 Minutes was at a called meeting of the Board of Stewards on April 9, 1920. M.K. Lee was chairman of the building committee and his report discussed two items. The plumbing was cut down to five toilets, four lavatories, and some drinking fountains. Lee also wanted the board to consider the choices of heating plants for the Sunday school building; the main choice seemed to be whether to get one just for the new part or to buy one that would heat the 1902 church (sanctuary, etc.). The choice was not disclosed in the minutes but it must have been a coal furnace for the whole building; there was a vote on October 4, 1921, to give the old heating plant to the AME church in Monroe. At the same October meeting it was voted to buy coal for the winter.

When there is a building program under way for the church, the church finances take up most of the business recorded. This continues until the debt is paid up, and it probably is both inevitable and typical for all churches. The April 9, 1920, meeting was called to get a report of the subscriptions from the treasurer of the building committee.

The following constituted the Board of Stewards for the year beginning in November, 1920.

Dr. J.E. Ashcraft	J.W. Lathan
W.S. Blakeney	G.S. Lee Sr.
E.W. Crow	Wriston Lee
W.Z. Faulkner	J.W. Love
W.M. Gordon	?B. Love
H.G. Hawfield	J.D. McRae
Joe Hudson	Sam Phifer
Fred Huntley	P.P.W. Plyler
E.C. Ingram	L.N. Presson, Chm.
C.B. Laney	W.F. Starnes
J.W. Laney	H.H. Wilson

At the first meeting of the new conference year, held November 9, 1920, the new pastor, the Reverend Dr. C.C. Weaver, outlined his hopes and plans for the year. J.W. Lathan was reelected treasurer and J.W. Love secretary. It was voted to pay the asphalt debt and to set the pastor's salary at \$3000. A committee was appointed to make assessments for the coming year, and the board was to meet on November 15 to see if members agreed to pay the amounts. No minutes were recorded for that meeting, nor for any others until May 16, 1921; insurance and minor unspecified improvements on the church were discussed. Current bills were paid and there was a \$500 balance in the

bank; that did not include the building program.

At the July 12, 1921, monthly meeting Dr. Weaver suggested that they aim at clearing up the budget items early so that would not interfere with the revival he planned to have in the fall, with Mr. Bridges assisting. They appointed a committee to see about paying for the new chairs recently bought for the educational building. And "the evils of a public dance hall were discussed at some length and by a unanimous vote the board went on record as opposing such in our city."

On October 4, 1921, the regular board meeting minutes state that there was \$800 on hand but \$2500 was needed to clear up all claims for the conference year. Again a special meeting the next week was to consider the need for money, no report given. The board did vote to invite the annual conference for Western North Carolina to meet at Central the next year (1922), subject to a vote of the congregation. That was to be the second time Central entertained the annual conference, the first being in 1902 when the sanctuary building was new.

W.Z. Faulkner did a good job as temporary secretary, even recording the members present, for the regular meeting December 5, 1921. Two major matters were presented. According to the minutes, M.K. Lee "made a statement that the church had a good big debt and that these papers were coming due and payments on pledges were not being made, and it was hard to meet these obligations unless we all made a special effort to meet our obligations, so that these notes can be retired as they come due." The other business was the resignation of Mrs. J.F. Laney as organist. Her beautifully worded letter read as follows:

To the Board of Stewards, Central Methodist Church

Some weeks ago I requested our pastor to present my resignation as organist and director of the choir to the board of stewards. Inasmuch as no report was made to me except the reading of my name in church on the music committee, I presume that a majority of the stewards do not object to my services in this capacity.

Now, my friends, no one ever accused me of being sensitive, but some disclosures during the meeting which were a revelation to me, coupled with the fact that I was docked \$20.00 in the spring when circumstances over which I had no control forced me to be absent a few Sundays, lead me to believe that there are some who desire a change. I am aware of the fact that no one ever gave universal satisfaction. But I feel that the testing time has

come. Dr. Bridgers admonished our church to expand and lest it be one-sided, I think I should give place to some one who is worth more than ten dollars a month.

What man among you would be willing for your wife to go thru this onerous, nerve-racking experience twice every Sunday, not to speak of choir practice twice a week and other duties attendant upon the position, year in and year out, with no thanks and the pittance of ten dollars a month?

The artistic appeal died years ago and this choir business has become a real job. What I ask is justice. Things that come too cheap are never valued and if I am worth only ten dollars a month to our great, big church that pays the janitor \$48.00 a month and other things in proportion, let me get out and help pay some one else who is worth more to us.

Very respectfully submitted,
Lillian G. Laney
(Mrs. J. Frank)

Monroe, NC
Dec. 5, 1921

The board received the letter, tabled it until a committee met with her (evidently that same night), then voted unanimously to give her a vote of thanks and a raise to \$25 a month. Also Mrs. J.W. Sewell was added to the music committee.

Mrs. Laney had been organist since the pipe organ was bought in 1910. Central Methodist was widely known for its excellent music and had a number of outstanding voices in the choir. "Miss Lillian" was to continue on as organist another ten years or so. Her next resignation letter was in a dispute over a concert to be given by a visiting Negro organist; the resignation was accepted.

Lee Griffin was the new treasurer, evidently elected to replace J.W. Lathan at the first (November) meeting of the conference year, for which the minutes are missing. Griffin included complete reports with the minutes of each meeting. Sometimes his report is the only evidence that a meeting was held. He continued as church treasurer until May, 1923, when he resigned to become president of the newly formed Epworth League.

In March, 1922, the board decided to use the bequest of the H.A. Shute estate for the building fund. In April they decided to hire a secretary to help the pastor if money could be found. In May the board voted to let Dr. Weaver take his vacation in June so that he could

It was in 1922 that the Annual Conference met for the second time at Central Church in Monroe. We can imagine that the new facilities were much used and admired at a large conference such as that. Two items from the local paper indicate the preparations required for staging such an event. Several hundred guests were expected and had to be fed two meals a day from Wednesday, October 18 through the following Sunday or Monday. The other article is headlined "Every Automobile in City is Wanted Tuesday Afternoon." The cars were requested to meet the two afternoon trains from Charlotte, expected to transport the majority of delegates to Monroe. Eight or ten cars would be needed on duty all week, with some rotation system to be devised.

Finances dominated the 1922 meetings in August, September, December, and into the year 1923. In August Mr. Gordon informed the board that the note for ten thousand dollars on the Sunday school building was due. The board discussed issuance of endowment policies on two of the youngest stewards as one way to pay the debt. Any decision was delayed until the Quarterly Conference met. The September meeting financial discussion concerned trying to collect the pledges before September 22. The emphasis was on the upcoming annual conference for Western North Carolina to be held at Central in early October. The only notes about an October meeting included in the book are the treasurer's report and a list of all the property insurance policies by R.B. Redwine. The church's indebtedness was discussed at the December and January meetings and finally at a called meeting on January 7, 1923, the plan proposed by the People's Building and Loan Association (on stationery belonging to Gordon Insurance & Investment Co.) was confirmed. The body of the letter was as follows:

"If the church will take out two hundred shares in our Building & Loan Association, which will call for a payment of \$2600 per year in installments, we will obligate to lend the church \$20,000 during the first half of 1924. After the loan is made there will be a further payment required of 6% interest on the loan. The installments and interest will be due and payable monthly.

"In order to simplify the matter, we will take a mortgage on the church property January 1, 1924, and put this up as security with the various banks of the town to secure notes given to them by us for any amounts we may be unable to furnish at the time the mortgage is given, provided we can make an arrangement of this kind with the banks which we feel sure we will have no trouble in doing.

amounts we may be unable to furnish at the time the mortgage is given, provided we can make an arrangement of this kind with the banks which we feel sure we will have no trouble in doing.

"The above proposition is made subject to the approval of our attorney and the Board of Directors."

One of our treasured artifacts is a quilt made by the ladies of the church, evidently as a money-making project. It has the names of 127 ladies of the church embroidered, four to a square. The middle square is labelled: "Women's Missionary Society — Mrs. L. N. Presson — 1922 — C. M. Church." The women must have given it to the parsonage for use there. Over thirty years later the Parsonage Committee chairman gave it to Mrs. A. J. Cox and she kept it thirty more years. When she attended the consecration of our present sanctuary in 1983, she gave it back to the church. If she had not taken it, and taken such good care of it, we would not have it to enjoy now.

The only business recorded at the February, 1923, board of stewards meeting was the authorization to circulate a paper of endorsement to protect the banks from loss on the church's note. All the stewards were urged to sign and as many of the congregation as possible.

At the May meeting Lee Griffin resigned, as noted above, and J.R. Hudson was elected treasurer in his place, with Clayton Laney as assistant. In June they voted to hire as assistant treasurer to be paid \$25-\$35 per month. Another vote approved requiring J.S. Stearns' signature of approval on all bills before being paid by the treasurer. "The note now being carried by the Bank of Union, an excess over the other banks, was ordered distributed." The August meeting also was mostly financial. They decided to mail notices to those delinquent in their pledges, to be followed by a personal canvass. A committee was appointed to work on building fund pledges. The September treasurer's report concluded the minutes book for the years 1919-1923. This book is definitely one to make a historian appreciate the value of good minutes regularly kept. Its lapses leave a lot to the imagination.



Chapter Eight

OUR MISSIONARY FAMILY IN JAPAN

Monroe's Central Methodist Church has been interested in the mission field and involved in support of missionaries to a greater or lesser degree for many years.

One of Central's own sons was a missionary to Japan from 1912 to 1941, and we are fortunate to have first-hand remembrances of him through his son, Dr. Paul Lanier Ogburn, who provided the following information regarding his missionary father, the Reverend Nicholas Snethen Ogburn, Jr.

Nicholas Snethen "Sneed" Ogburn, Jr., was born in Monroe in 1884 and reared in Central Church. He was the seventh child (fourth living child) and second son in a prominent and musically-talented family who lived at 314 West Windsor St. Nicholas Snethen Ogburn, Sr., and Eliza Bright Wolfe had another son, Francis Asbury Ogburn, and three daughters, Pearl Ogburn Laney, Maude Ogburn Yates, and Bright Ogburn Hoyle. Maude sang in the Central Church choir and Pearl was the organist for many years. Frequent home singing was enjoyed by the entire family, which, as distant cousins of Sidney Lanier, was very poetically and musically inclined. Sneed sang a pleasing baritone and loved to sing harmony. He was a member of the Trinity College Glee Club and the Vanderbilt University Glee Club. Throughout his life loved to sing popular and wedding music solos, and especially religious music, both in America and in Japan. Sneed is remembered by older members of the church as a gentle, refined, serious, talented, and dedicated young man.

Sneed's higher education began at Trinity College in the fall of 1900, and he graduated four years later in 1905. While there he roomed with Zentsuki "Zensky" Hinohara, a Japanese Christian who was studying for the ministry. Sneed was so impressed with this young man and the idea that he had been brought to Christ by some of our Methodist missionaries, that he became interested in carrying Christ's message to other young Japanese men and women, in Japan.

From 1905 to 1908 Sneed taught underprivileged millworker's

children at the Southern Industrial Institute in Chadwick-Hoskins mill district of Charlotte under the direction of the Reverend J. A. Baldwin. In later life many of his children/students wrote or came to see him to thank him for the encouragement and inspiration he had provided for them during their formative years. During 1908 he also completed the summer term at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. From 1908 to 1911 he took his seminary training at Vanderbilt University, where most of his letters and papers are presently preserved. His first pastorate was at Chadwick Methodist Church in Charlotte. He was first admitted to the Western North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1907, was ordained deacon in 1911, and achieved full connection (ordained Elder) in 1914.

The Reverend Ogburn accepted commission by the Methodist Board of Missions in 1912 and was assigned to the mission field in Japan. He sailed from San Francisco on October 19, 1912, shortly after the taking of a family portrait on the front lawn of the family home on West Windsor Street in Monroe. During the picture-taking he was heard to state his concern regarding his ability to carry out God's plan for his life. But once he started on his crusade, he never looked back, although his work required prolonged separation from home, family, and his betrothed, Miss Maude Shuford Hoyle, who endured a seven-year separation until he was finally able to return and marry her in 1921!

Arriving in Japan in early November, 1912, on the Japanese steamship, *Shinyo Maru*, Sneed was assigned to the Missionary Japanese Language School for almost two years. When he could preach a simple sermon in Japanese, he was appointed to an evangelical ministry in the agricultural town of Uwajima, as well as the towns of Mitajiri and Matsuyama. These are located on the smallest of the three main islands, Shikoku. He and the Reverend Mr. Demaree, also an American Methodist missionary, lived and worked together, cooking, cleaning, and washing the laundry as they had time. At long last they were able to hire a native cook, but their cookware was of poor quality and in disrepair. At one meal the cook found a hole in the casserole dish but used it anyhow, stuffing an old sock under the food to keep it from leaking.

In 1920 the missionary was able to return home on a year's furlough, during which time he married his fiancée of seven years, Maude Hoyle, a young business woman of Charlotte who was employed by the Cudhy Packing Company. Maude and her sister, Helen, also a

Charlotte business woman, saved and bought their mother a home on South Myers Street. Maude's father was the Reverend Maxwell Humphrey Hoyle, a horseback circuit-riding Methodist minister who served, among others, the Monroe Circuit, the Pleasant Grove Circuit, and the Weddington Circuit during his service from 1870 to 1907. He died from an abdominal malignancy in 1908. Maude's brother, Jesse Lee Hoyle, married Sneed's younger sister, Bright Swindell Ogburn, making her children and Sneed's double first cousins!

During the furlough year the Mission Baord appointed Reverend Mr. Ogburn to be a teacher at Kwansei Gakuin School, a Methodist mission school for boys (now a university) in Kobe. Kobe is located on the main island, Honshu, with two to three million inhabitants and is the most international city, a port second only to Yokohama. The school was founded in Kobe City by Bishop Lambuth in the late nineteenth century and outgrew its twenty-or-so-acre campus by 1929. The property was sold at a profit and the school relocated at Nishinomiya, half way between Kobe and Osaka where a much larger college was built on a greatly expanded campus. Ten new homes for the missionary families were also built on the campus, and the Ogburn family occupied one of these. They had become a family of three with the arrival of Paul Lanier Ogburn on March 20, 1922 in Kobe International Hospital. On the new campus Reverend Mr. Ogburn continued to teach English and Bible to middle school students (the school served only male students) and tried to interest them in Christianity. There were about 800 to 1000 students in the middle school but many more older students in the various colleges: literary, theological, business, etc. The students were urged to further their education by attending one of the colleges after completing middle and high schools. There were no boarding students and the tuition was a lot for some of the boys' families. Reverend Ogburn helped some students earn their tuition by helping around the home while they practiced their English. Lanier remembers the Japanese students as serious and endearing, but he did not attend the same school as the Japanese students.

Reverend Mr. Ogburn tried in many ways not only to educate but to personalize the Christian way of life for his students. Every week he invited a group to his home; and since it was unusual for Japanese to be invited to the home of a foreigner, the students were impressed and enjoyed these gatherings very much. Sneed also wrote and published a book to give to his pupils, entitled *LITTLE ROADS TO UNDERSTANDING*. It was designed to teach them how to behave in a

foreigner's home and how to be kind, loving, and responsible. One reason that being a Christian missionary was difficult in a foreign land was that the Japanese could not understand why Christianity was so fragmented into so many competing denominations. After World War II the Japanese Christian denominations united to form the Japanese United Christian Church.

Mrs. Ogburn considered her greatest challenge raising their son, especially after their second son, Phillip, was stillborn as a result of the extremely great strain placed upon her following the Great Tokyo Earthquake of 1923. One of the disconsolate survivors was assigned to her home for the last several months of her pregnancy and spent all hours of the day and night bemoaning the very sad losses of his family and possessions. When Lanier entered the Canadian Academy Maude taught individual Japanese students, and enjoyed especially trying to help a blind student learn English over a number of years. In addition she was active in the Christian Women's League, which sought to minister to working women and especially to the maids and cooks.

When the Ogburn family came home on furlough in 1928, they made the Hoyle home on South Myers Street in Charlotte their headquarters. Lanier attended Elizabeth School for first grade, while his father travelled, attending meetings and preaching sermons and delivering speeches about the mission field in Japan. When they went back to Japan, Lanier studied at home for a year, then attended the Canadian Academy for grades 3-12, with the exception of grade 9 at Alexander Graham Junior High School in Charlotte during the furlough year 1936-1937. The Canadian Academy was founded in 1913 by the Canadian Methodist Church for the children of its missionaries and all other so-called "foreign" children. At one time or another there were as many as twenty-five different nationalities represented, with members of all races, colors, and religions enrolled. Lanier made lifelong friendships there; and without brothers and sisters of his own, he considers these friends his true sisters and brothers! Over the years he and his wife Merlene have attended reunions of the school in Toronto, Maryland, Kyoto, Japan, and Palm Springs. The latest reunion (1993) was held in Victoria, Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. He and Merlene also made a 1988 visit to Kobe, Japan to assist in the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Canadian Academy.

In the early 1930's, after Japan invaded Manchuria, radical groups developed and the military became more and more powerful. Lanier remembers the Japanese as very intense but intelligent and peaceful

people. But, as in Nazi Germany, the military assumed power and gradually took over the government. College students, as well as all draft-age males, were required to take military training. Beginning about 1938 it was not unusual to hear the sound of machine guns on the Kwansei Gakuin campus. War seemed inevitable by 1939 and the United States government advised all military-age males to return to the States. Accordingly, after Lanier graduated from high school in 1940, he and his mother returned to the United States in October of that year. The Reverend Mr. Ogburn stayed on under very trying circumstances. Living conditions became hectic. There was not enough fuel and very little available food; many common items were scarce. He tried to salvage something from their worldly goods by selling off their meager possessions, with indifferent results. By October, 1941, Reverend Mr. Ogburn had sold everything he could, but then he experienced difficulty obtaining passage on ships leaving Japan. Ticket offices were overflowing with prospective passengers. Fortunately he was finally successful and was able to book passage on a Japanese passenger ship destined for San Francisco in late November, 1941. Providentially the Japanese war lords had not scheduled Pearl Harbor until the seventh of December; with an earlier schedule his Japanese ship would have been ordered back to Japan and five years of harsh imprisonment would have been his fate!

After Maude and Lanier returned to the home on South Myers Street, Charlotte, Lanier entered Duke University at the beginning of the second semester in January, 1941. He was placed on an accelerated course through undergraduate and medical schools, as the United States Army urgently needed more doctors. In Medical School he entered the Army Specialized Training Program as a second lieutenant, receiving his M.D. degree in 1946 as a first lieutenant. He took his basic training at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas where he was transferred to the Air Force. He was given four choices regarding where he would rather serve: Alaska, the U.S., Europe, or the Far East. Inasmuch as he had been reared in Japan, he thought it might be a change to serve in any of the first three theatres, so he placed them first on the application. Inexperience in Army ways led him to make this mistake; in the Army one is always assigned his last choice!

By this time (October 7, 1947) he had married a Duke University nursing student from Florida, Merlene Green, who, as an officer's wife, was eligible to follow him overseas. Bookings for travel by ship were filled for months ahead, however, and finding herself pregnant, she was informed that she could not be transferred after her sixth

month, which was then approaching. She was able to get a flight to Japan, as many of the wives were afraid to fly that distance. Their first child was born in a converted post office building (U.S. Army hospital) "special delivery" on August 4, 1948, in Fukuoka, the capital city of Kyushu, on the southernmost Japanese island.

In Japan Lieutenant Ogburn was assigned to the Headquarters 315th Composite Wing of the Fifth Air Force, located in Kasuga-baru, some five miles south of Fukuoka. Following his promotion to captain, Lanier and Merlene with their basket-baby in the back seat, made some daring trips all over occupied Japan, including Yokohama, Tokyo, Gotemba, the Ise peninsula, Kyoto, Kobe (including the bombed-out site of the original Canadian Academy), Nara, and Hiroshima. All of this was made possible by Lanier's knowledge of the Japanese language and the kindness of various Army units which provided gasoline at cost! On several occasions, while passing through small, out-of-the-way villages, the villagers, many of whom may never have seen a seiyojin (foreigner) would crowd around the car to obtain a better view of the strange occupants. Several of the Japanese, on a number of occasions, were overheard to commiserate among themselves over the sad fate of the foreign lady, who had long black hair like themselves. Paul, lying in his basket on the back seat, was large for his age, even as large as some of the Japanese children at age 1 1/2 or 2, but was quite content to lie almost motionless. The villagers were overheard to say over and over, "Poor, poor woman! She has a child who can't walk and is unable to even move out of his basket, and a husband who is obviously demented because, look! he has red hair!!" Lanier had to translate for Merlene, who almost broke up with laughter! Then she had the nerve to nod her head in vigorous agreement with the villagers!

After his military service, Lanier received a surgical fellowship at the Mayo Clinic, where he completed his surgical training in 1955. Three more sons were born at the Mayo Clinic. Their daughter was born in Statesville, North Carolina. Three of the sons are doctors, one an anaesthesiologist, one a cardiac surgeon, and one is head of the Obstetrics Department of the Mayo Clinic. Their daughter, Mrs. Virginia Ogburn Matthews, is a marine biologist at the University of South Carolina Marine Research Laboratory at the Hobcaw Barony, a 17500-acre wildlife preserve on the eastern outskirts of Georgetown. Lanier practiced general surgery at the Davis Hospital in Statesville from 1955 until his retirement in November, 1987.

After his return from Japan, the Reverend Mr. Ogburn served

several pastorates in the Western North Carolina Conference. He preached at Morven during the summer of 1942, then served at Harmony in Concord (1942-1943). For the next two years he was on the Cherryville circuit, then Stanfield (1944-1947), and finally Old Fort (1947-1950). He and Maude retired to their Hoyle home on South Myers Street in 1950. They moved to the Dilworth section about 1963, as the Myers Street house was to be the site of a new Mecklenburg office building. They entered the Methodist Home in Charlotte in 1971 soon after they celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Mrs. Ogburn died in 1976 at age 92. When the Reverend Sneed Ogburn died on December 20, 1983, at age 99 1/3, he was the eldest surviving minister of the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church. Lanier eulogized his father in *The Charlotte Observer*:

"Sneed Ogburn loved the Lord — he was always GOD's man! Through him God's love shone brightly on all who knew him. Like the Lord he served, a gentle loving spirit, he yet was angered by all forms of evil and would make no compromise with any substance or passion which could conceivably damage the body (tobacco, alcohol, drugs) or the soul (avarice, greed, intolerance, etc.). He especially loved to sing (solo or in harmony) and to write poetry (has published several songs and a book of poems "WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE LOVELY"; and spent his life singing, teaching God's love, writing poetry, loving and inspiring everyone, and spreading the word of God."



Our Missionary Family in Japan:
Missionary Sneed Ogburn and wife Maude at front left. Son Lanier at back right.



Chapter Nine

A PROBLEM DEBT

1923-1941

For a few years after 1923 we are fortunate to have both the quarterly conference records and the minutes of the Board of Stewards. A common theme was the lack of financial commitment and stewardship for the members at Central. The regular budget was not usually pledged, but the root problem was the leftover building fund loan from the 1921 construction of the education building and the new parsonage.

Though probably few of Central's members were farmers, the economy of Union County was still based on agriculture until halfway into the twentieth century. Some of the members owned farms, worked by tenants or by hired help. Since cotton was the main cash crop, the drop in the price of cotton in the 1920's affected just about everybody. No doubt this dependence on farm prices affected the financing of the church, and the pay-off of the construction loan, in what was a generally prosperous era nationwide.

Cultural events in Monroe were not unusual. The old Opera House was the site of many a travelling show, or lecture series, or local production (some of these were quite elaborate) using the plentiful local talent, some of whom were Methodist. Central Church has been known for its fine musical program and it had an outstanding choir with fine solo voices in the twenties. William Jennings Bryan, a famous orator and presidential candidate for the Democratic party in 1896, 1900, and 1908, visited Monroe. He made two speeches here, one in the Opera House and one at Central Methodist Church. No doubt "The Great Commoner" was well received, as he was a powerful and persuasive speaker, even in his mid-sixties. In spite of three defeats when he ran for President, he was a leader in the Democratic party and quite influential. (Of course, at this time local politics were predominantly Democratic.) In his lectures and through his paper, *The*

Commoner, he espoused the cause of prohibition, of religion, and of morality. His appearance in Monroe was not long before he went to Dayton, Tennessee, to participate in the Scopes "monkey" trial in July of 1925. He, of course, argued the case successfully against Scopes and the teaching of evolution in the public schools. He died in Dayton five days after the trial was over.

In October, 1925, a new treasurer was chosen at Central for the new conference year, Mrs. T.T. (Kate) Capehart. She was the daughter of W. H. (Uncle Billy) Phifer, and she proved to be a conscientious and devoted treasurer for thirty-one years, serving under fifteen preachers. Her reports dominated the business at the Board of Stewards' meetings and their response was more paperwork and documentation for her to do. In August, 1924, the board wanted notices mailed to delinquents; the next week the deficit in unpaid assessments was \$4000 (about half of the budget), with less than two months remaining in the conference year. On October 31, 1924, the treasurer was instructed to renew the note and add the interest to the face of the note if it was impossible to pay the interest. In December, 1925, soon after Mrs. Capehart was elected, the board voted to send statements near the end of each quarter and put in the bulletin the names of those who had paid in full each quarter.

In December, 1923, Dr. C. C. Weaver began his fourth year at Central. He wrote: "This church has for itself a real task this year if it at all approaches the performance of its duty. In the first place our budget remains to be subscribed and the every member canvass to be completed. We must this year reach the last member of the congregation and impress on him his obligation to the church. In the second place the church debt must be provided for. Its continuance is a reproach — even a disgrace to this people. No evasion of this plain duty can ever be justified."

The other work of the church was going well. The total attendance at Sunday school was 515 the first Sunday of September, 1923. Church membership stood at 916, a gain of 34 in a year. Most reports from the Sunday school were glowing, and there were training schools for the teachers (sometimes in cooperation with other denominations). Union services with other city churches for summer Sunday night services were tried with success.

The missionary spirit was alive and well with the women and the youth. The adult society had 115 members divided into eight circles, meeting monthly. Other than keeping up with the sick and needy, the local work of the women included building a kitchen for the church.

Local expenditures were \$450.63. Also a total of \$950 was sent to the conference treasurer, second place financially in the Charlotte District. The two young people's societies had 54 members and sent \$102.55 to the conference, spending \$27 on a local level. The one society in the junior division was under the leadership of the pastor's wife. It led the conference by sending in \$161.15. The baby division with 74 members sent in \$38.85. The societies also sent a deserving girl to Brevard Institute. Mrs. C. C. Weaver undoubtedly influenced the whole spectrum of missionary societies. Mrs. Weaver formed a new missionary society for young women and it was named the Florence Weaver Society in her honor. Her influence was conference-wide and she was Woman's Society Conference President Emeritus well into the 1960's.

At the December 7, 1925, meeting of the Board of Stewards the new pastor, the Reverend Dr. Henry Grady Hardin, was promised a salary of \$4500, the same as his predecessor. He set about organizing the leadership of the church. The ten committees set up were: finance, public worship, publicity, music, ushers, plate, custodian, entertainment, invitation, and committee on the poor. After the committee chairmen were named, the list was to be put in the newspaper. There was also to be a committee to draft by-laws and a program of procedure. The treasurer was to send a statement to the head of each household as the end of each quarter approached, and the names of those paid up in full for each quarter would be put in the church bulletin. Last but not least, the board chairman was to appoint a committee to formulate plans to erase the church debt.

Part of Dr. Hardin's report to the quarterly conference on December 18, 1925, reads: "For several years this church has had a debt of considerable proportion contracted at the time of the erection of the new Sunday school building and the parsonage. At the last meeting of the Board of Stewards it was decided that an effort would be made to secure by January the first, in cash and in notes payable not more than a year hence, an amount sufficient to cover the entire indebtedness, which amount is approximately thirty thousand dollars." The report, dated March 10, 1926, said the campaign was entirely successful. That report proved prematurely optimistic. These year-long notes were held by the individual members and were not promptly paid off. The regular budget was far behind on May 3, 1926, and the treasurer was to make an effort to collect outstanding pledges and be authorized to borrow the money to pay pressing bills. The September 6, 1926, board meeting chose a Sunday two weeks hence to be "pay up day". At the

November 1, 1926, board meeting the treasurer reported a total of \$11,832.07 in disbursements for the previous year. A new method of assessment was tried; the members assessed themselves by appearing in person before the board. Pledges amounted to \$12,755.60. Also it was decided that each member of the board would be responsible for certain families (presumably in the matter of financial pledges). By March of 1927 each of three banks held a note in the amount of \$6518.52; the banks were the Bank of Union, Farmers' Bank & Trust Co., and First National Bank. On December 13, 1926, the membership of the church was reported at 1001 to the quarterly conference.

Other business of the church had to go on. Part of a truss of the main auditorium was badly out of line and about to break. It was fixed, and new grates were put in the furnace. Some cedar trees had to be removed from the church yard. The telephone was moved from the pastor's study out into the hall. The pastor's study was fitted with screens on the door and windows. There were no evening services in August, 1927 (it was customary for the pastor's vacation to be in August). The church treasurer's salary of \$300 per year remained the same, as did the \$25 per month for the organist, Mrs. Laney. A bell was placed in the tower in 1927. The property committee was to compare quality of coal for the furnace at \$6.75 per ton delivered. W. S. Blakeney was to insure the church property stored at his home; no reason was given for the storage nor listing of the items involved. The new church stationery read at the top, "The church moves forward on the feet of its little children."

Women were beginning to be put in responsible positions and to attend board meetings. Mrs. L. N. Presson, ex-president of the missionary society, and Mrs. T. C. Lee, current president both attended board meetings regularly as early as 1922. Miss Lura Heath was given the position of assisting the pastor in circulation of Christian literature. Mrs. C. C. Weaver was a delegate to district conference. Women were usually heads of the lower levels of the Sunday school — primary, beginners, and cradle roll. The junior department was split into junior boys and junior girls. From the time Mrs. Capehart was elected church treasurer in October, 1925, she was named as an alternate district delegate and on various committees; she soon became a valuable staff member doing a (sometimes) thankless job. Also in October, 1925, the first woman Sunday school superintendent, Mrs. Walter C. Crowell, began a successful tenure; this office has always been considered very important by each and every pastor. Two months later the pastor, Dr. Hardin, reported, "The wisdom of our

choice for this most important position is being proven each week that passes. With Mrs. Crowell at the head of such a fine body of officers and teachers as we have here, the success of our Sunday school work is assured." The total Sunday school enrollment was 897 (the total church enrollment at the time was 977) with 71 teachers. The average attendance was reported at 51%, or about 460. The collection during the quarter was \$344.40. Mrs. W. S. Blakeney was another name prominent in the work of the church at this time.

Included in the March 10, 1926, quarterly conference report was a detailed report of the working of the missionary societies. "The Woman's Missionary Society begins it year's work January first. We anticipate this opening by organizing and electing new officers in November previous . . . As now organized, our society is divided into the following groups. The Adult Woman's Missionary Society which is the parent group, now having a membership of 115, is divided into 7 circles. In addition to these circles we have the following subordinate groups: the Florence Weaver Missionary Society, Young People No. 1 & 2, Light Bearers No. 1 & 2 — making a total of 254 women, young people, and children in the entire society. Each circle in the adult society meets separately once a month at the homes of members to study the Bible and mission study books and enjoy a social hour afterwards. On the first Monday in each month our regular business meeting is held at the church. At this time reports are given from all circles and all leaders from the different societies give reports of work done in their societies. The various committees also give reports. Our devotional is conducted each month by one of the circles. Practically all work of the society is carried on through the circles — each circle having a leader and treasurer. Pledges are made at the beginning of the year by each circle. This year the circles averaged \$100 apiece. Flowers are placed in the church every Sunday, a circle serving a month at a time. The Society at last meeting sent \$15 to our new Methodist church at Chapel Hill for seats. Many visits are made by members and numerous trays, flowers, etc., are sent to sick and shut-ins. We are supporting a deserving orphan girl at Brevard Institute who is doing good work. In addition to the funds aforementioned our bazaar and flower show every year net us between \$300 and \$350. In order to keep up our record of the past year all of our fine societies are striving towards and expect to make the honor roll."

In late 1927 there was a new preacher, the Reverend A. D. Wilcox, who stayed only one year. At the December board meeting the treasurer reported poor success with assessments, and she was re-

quested to prepare a directory for the new pastor. Two money requests were delayed. A request for \$300 for Sunday school literature was tabled but was put in the budget at the January meeting. The matter of heating the parsonage was discussed and a committee formed to get subscriptions; by January only \$185 had been collected so the heating plant was postponed. In February Mrs. Blakeney presented the proposition of the church buying a lot at Lake Junaluska; it was declined in view of the financial problems at Central. One of the few reports of the music committee is recorded; five suggestions were made and adopted. New music was authorized, as were vestments for the choir. Mrs. Laney was reelected organist, the musical program was to be published a week in advance, and the choir loft was to be heated. In October, 1928, Ray Shute organized a Boy Scout troop to be sponsored by the church, and it was to meet in Phifer Hall.

At the end of 1928 a new pastor arrived, the Reverend Ashley Chappell. Of all the records, his reports were the shortest and least informative. He didn't name the new members, sometimes did not even give the numbers. He was to remain three years, until late 1931. Neither he nor his predecessor Wilcox said anything in their quarterly conference reports about the church debt. Early in 1929, 150 new hymnals were bought with a free-will offering. At the February board meeting they voted for future meetings to be held at 6:30 and let the women serve supper (the response of the women was not recorded). A year later they requested that the ministerial association ask drug stores and filling stations to close during the hours for Sunday school and church services.

As the Depression deepened (it was not really mentioned as such in the church records), finances were the prominent topic at all board meetings. In September 1929, at a special meeting the treasurer reported \$5313.90 had been collected, but there was \$5360.95 in unpaid pledges with the end of the conference year to come the next month. The long-term debt was the topic of much discussion at the June 1, 1930, board meeting. The board went on record in favor of refinancing and the finance committee was to report back on a plan of action. The treasurer was to get a list of individual members' notes still unpaid at the local banks. The treasurer was further authorized to borrow as much as \$500 to pay accumulated church expenses. On September 7, 1930, the following was recorded: "A proposition from the American National Insurance Co. to make a 10-year loan to the church for the purpose of paying off the church debt was presented by A. M. Secrest, chairman of the finance committee. On motion of W. M.

Gordon, seconded by J. W. Fowler, it was ordered that a loan not exceeding \$25,000 be negotiated, the loan to be secured by a mortgage on the church property and a re-purchase agreement signed by not less than 25 responsible members of the church."

A month later, in October, 1930, \$6000 was unpaid on the budget near the end of the conference year. A canvass was planned. When November came and \$3521.71 was still unpaid, another canvass was held. The board requested the district steward ask that our conference apportionments be reduced. The next two board meetings had lengthy discussions on the loan situation and fifty signatures were requested on a surety bond. The quarterly conference directed the Board of Trustees to borrow \$22,500 for ten years at 6% interest (a rather high interest charge for that era). On January 2, 1931, a "Re-Purchase Agreement" was made between American National Insurance Co. of Galveston, Texas, and Central Church. The re-payment schedule called for annual payments of \$1125 on the principal and were to commence on January 1, 1932, with the last to be paid on January 1, 1941. The insurance company held the first lien Deed of Trust (mortgage) on the Church. The last paragraph read in part: "Therefore, we, the undersigned . . . promise and agree that save harmless . . . Insurance Company . . . against loss on account of the principal, interest, . . . promise and agree to pay . . . any deficiency . . ." In other words, these men and women were mortgaging their own futures for the sake of the church. The fifty-one signatures affixed to the document were as follows:

J. Ray Shute	Locke A. Robinson	James Hutchinson
C.E. Hamilton	Carr Bowie	Mrs. Azilee Hernig
A.M. Secrest	Ab Joseph	Mrs. W. J. Heath
J.W. Laney	G.M. Smith	J. Allen Lee
R.D. Crow	Claude Eubanks	C. A. McRorie
Edwin Niven	C.D. Roberts	T. E. Carter
W. S. Blakeney	H. M. Presson	R. E. Lee
Townley Stevens	M.L. Braswell	F. T. Lander
J.S. Stearnes	H. Bowles	J. H. Helms
L.N. Presson	B. Frank Harris	H. H. Davis
J.E.? Stewart	J. W. Fowler?	Mrs. T. T. Capehart
J. H. Price	E.C. Laney	T.C. Anderson
J. Ray Lingle	Wriston ? Lee	L.H. Couch
Walter C. Crowell	Lee Griffin	F.H. Huntley
T.L.A. Helms	T.W.M. Gordon	D.A. Bowles
W. B. Love	S.S. Howie	S.E. Haigler
W.J. Holloway	T.A. Scales	J.B. Simpson

In March 1931, the Reverend Chappell suggested a sacrificial offering to go toward retiring the debt; his plan was to give each family a small cotton sack in which to accumulate money between then and October 15. In place of a July revival (possibly to save money) plans were made for cottage prayer meetings and family worship emphasis. The delayed painting of the outside of the church was planned with several stewards agreeing to donate paint. The new pastor, the Reverend Dr. C. N. Clark must have been in for a rude awakening, if he did not know the financial condition of the church in advance. On November 9, 1931, his salary was reduced from \$4200 to \$3000. At a called meeting of the Board of Stewards at 9:30 the next morning the salary was upgraded to \$3600. The Reverend Clark remained one year and was followed by the Reverend H. C. Sprinkle, who also stayed only one year. When the Reverend A. L. Stanford arrived in late 1933, it was for a two-year tenure.

At the first quarterly conference on December 12, 1934, the preacher reported statistical information. There were 1039 members, up from 956 of the previous year. The value of the church plant was \$119,000 with indebtedness of \$19,000. The parsonage was valued at \$20,000. The pastor's salary was \$3600. Conference apportionments were \$2400 with only \$1000 paid. Of the \$14,030 total amount raised, the Woman's Missionary Society raised \$1350. The women paid \$600 on the church debt (the annual payment on the note was \$1125). It is widely conceded that the women made the difference between paying off the church debt and defaulting on the loan. They raised money with rummage sales, Daffodil luncheons, and serving the meals to several civic clubs. This is some of the church history that should have been recorded somewhere.

A church-wide revival was held before the second quarterly conference on April 17, 1935, and it was quite successful. The Reverend Stanford expected about one hundred people to join the city churches as a result of the evangelistic services. The next two quarterly conference reports referred to some decline in attendance due to a state-wide polio epidemic. At the fourth quarterly conference held on September 2, 1935, the Reverend Stanford reported the church debt in fine shape but "we are behind with our budget." He concluded, "We are confidently expecting to close our year with credit and rejoicing."

A new pastor was welcomed before the first quarterly conference of the new year, held on December 4, 1935. He was the Reverend Walter R. Kelly and is fondly remembered by some of our present members.

The membership stood at 1065. The budget amount raised was \$13,968 for all purposes. The pastor's salary stood at \$3600. The full conference apportionment of \$2000 was paid. The reports by the preacher and by Superintendent of Sunday School W. Z. Faulkner each quarter continued to be optimistic. In January, 1937, at the beginning of the Reverend Kelly's second year, the membership was down to 968. The total amount raised by the church was \$11,379, of which \$1478 was from the women. Mention was made in the pastor's report of repair work and painting on the church and the parsonage. "This work amounts to about \$1200 and is a cash proposition."

On February 9, 1937, the chairman of the Board of Stewards requested of the mortgage holder, American National Insurance Company of Galveston, Texas, a statement showing the pay-off on the loan as of March 1. The reply, dated February 15 gave the principal balance as \$15,750 with \$157.50 interest through March 1, plus interest of \$2.63 per day after March 1. The letter dated March 4 to the Texas company enclosed a check for \$15, 923.28 to satisfy the indebtedness. No doubt there was much satisfaction that this matter was finally resolved and the church was free of the debt that had plagued it for sixteen years. The account in the *Charlotte Observer* stated that during the first 60 days of 1937 the church raised some \$22,000 and "today its budget is balanced, the church, Sunday school rooms and parsonage have been completely renovated, the church debt paid in full, all local and outstanding debts paid in full and all salaries, etc., paid in advance of the date; and there is yet money in the treasury." The article gives credit to the leadership of the Reverend W. R. Kelly and states that the money came from a lot of small contributions instead of a few large ones. Bishop Paul B. Kern came to dedicate the Sunday school plant on Sunday, April 4. At the end of the church year the Reverend Kelly was generous in his praise of the loyalty of the members and "we are grateful to our Heavenly Father for the blessing of the year."

There is a hand-written list of marriages performed by the Reverend Kelly. In order they are: Hubert Graham McLean and Emma Lee Tuttle; J. V. Brooks and Sara Hill; David Caldwell and Ruby Smith; N. E. Fletcher and Frances Stack; P. G. Mangum and Elizabeth Moore; C. Brack Laney and Jessie Smith; T. E. Marshal, Jr. and Sara Faulkner; Rev. E. B. Edwards and Rachel Copeland; R. E Field and Marion Simpson; W. M. Heath and Burdette Scales; N. B. Mason and Elizabeth Redwine; D. C. Huffman and Mildred Henry; Paul Coble and Clara Bivens; Roland Phifer and Margie Matthews.

Brother Kelly did not rest on his laurels for his last year at Central. His reports are of revivals and the Aldersgate commemoration. The latter is also referred to in the Sunday school superintendent's report to the first quarterly conference held on November 21, 1937. W. Z. Faulkner ended his report with, "We realize that our church and school needs more than anything else that strange heartwarming which to a Christian means so much individually, and to our church universal, a great awakening." On October 5, at the fourth quarterly conference Kelly's report mentions the upcoming annual conference to begin on October 20; he perhaps knew he was ending his days at Central, probably with mixed emotions, for it had certainly been a successful pastorate by any measure. He is remembered to this day as one of the most popular preachers that Central ever had.

At the first quarterly conference held on December 21, 1938, the membership totalled 1023, up from 989 the previous year. There were 446 Methodist families. The two missionary societies had a membership of 223; they raised \$396 for local work and sent \$588 to the conference treasurer. The pastor's salary was \$2700, with \$216 paid by Central to the Presiding Elder (District Superintendent). The unified budget system was used for finances, with an every member canvass and weekly pledges and payment to the budget. The new pastor, the Reverend Dr. Gilbert R. Combs, highly praised the unified budget, as well as the monthly reports to the Board of Stewards and the monthly payments on each budget item. He was pleased also with the work and missionary consciousness of the women's work. His only negative comment as he began his three years at Central was the lack of attendance at Sunday school.

In his report on the state of the church to the second quarterly conference held March 19, 1939, Dr. Combs mentioned a successful financial first quarter and his instruction of "a considerable number of the children" planning to join the church on Palm Sunday, April 2. His list of thirteen approved objectives for 1939 certainly imply an organized approach to his pastoral duties. These objectives included: a church loyalty campaign to increase attendance; a youth crusade to last a week; a Christian Stewardship Institute to be conducted by a prominent layman (other Methodist churches to be invited); organization of a Men's Brotherhood; increased efficiency of the Board of Stewards and better attendance at their monthly meetings; purchase of more hymnals; new carpet for the sanctuary; meeting all financial obligations and quarterly balancing of books; increasing Sunday school attendance by 20%; and increasing the effectiveness of the

women's missionary organizations.

On July 2, 1939, Dr. Combs reported that seventeen young people joined the church, presumably the class he instructed that was received on Palm Sunday. Central contributed \$100 to the fund for the rehabilitation of the church work in China. The special report on Education given to the third quarterly conference underscored the historic Methodist interest in this matter. College Day was observed and a sermon on Christian Education had been preached. A listing of college students from the church included thirty-four scholars at sixteen different schools. One student, Charles Shannon, was studying for the ministry at Duke, to enter the School of Religion that fall.

A church conference was held on October 11, 1939, to act on purging the church rolls. Because of the rather long list of names, it was deemed advisable for a committee to consider each name and report back, which they did on October 15 after the Sunday evening service. As a result, twenty-five names were purged.

The fourth quarterly conference was held on October 16, 1939, and had the usual detailed report by Pastor Combs. The church had just completed a successful Loyalty Campaign; committee members visited and mailed cards each week to the membership and "real results were obtained in this campaign." "

These were exciting times in Methodism. In May of 1939 there was held in Kansas City, Missouri, a Uniting Conference to form The Methodist Church from the union of these three bodies: the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The Uniting Session of the Western North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, with the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church and the Blue Ridge-Atlantic Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was held in Greensboro, North Carolina, on Friday evening, October 20, 1939. The three bishops conducting the service were Clare Purcell, James H. Straughn, and Wallace E. Brown. There are two programs from this service in our archives. The women also had a uniting conference for their organization.

Dr. Combs' report on the state of the church in October referred to the unification obliquely in his praise of the women's work. He wrote, "Our women show a real eagerness to learn the new set-up of our missionary activities under the united church and to follow the program that has been formulated." Leading the women in this transition was Mrs. Claude Benton (Blanche Howie). (We are so fortunate to have Mrs. Benton still with us as a source of wisdom and

remembrance.) The result was that the two missionary societies joined together to form the Woman's Society of Christian Service. They were divided into smaller groups called circles. One of the concessions to the set-up of the northern branch was the Wesleyan Service Guild for working women (not that many women in our area worked outside the home at that time).

At the first quarterly conference of the new year held on December 20, 1939, the membership reported was 981, down from 1023 the year before. (This was due mostly to the purging of the roll.) The preacher's salary increased from \$2700 to \$3000. A training school for Christian workers was in the planning stage. The Women's work was praised.

In March at the second quarterly conference Dr. Combs reported a very successful training school held at Central on March 10-15, 1940. Other Methodist churches in the county joined in, sixteen in all, with 122 "pupils", fifty-two from Central. Evangelistic services were planned for April 14-21 with the Reverend J. L. Stokes, III, of Randleman, to preach. Nothing special appeared in the reports the rest of the year. As Dr. Combs began his last year at Central, his January 5, 1941, report to the first quarterly conference was decidedly pessimistic. Some old members remember his criticism of members, especially women, who did civic volunteer work when, in his view, they should have been doing church work. That criticism was not well received. The first paragraph of the pastor's report reads: "The minister would be delighted to be able to report marked progress in all departments of the church but the best that his conscience will permit is to say that we are 'about holding our own'. And I will not even indulge the comforting phrase that 'the Baptists are doing no better.' "

There are few records from 1941 until the fourth quarterly conference held on October 15, 1941. The treasurer's annual summary showed a total of current expenses as \$6715.29 and benevolences amounting to \$1718.75. The annual report of the president of the Woman's Society of Christian Service is much more informative than the pastor's report. Mrs. Benton reported a membership of 139 in the Society and 53 in the Wesleyan Service Guild, a total of 192. Of the total amount of \$893.53 raised by the women, \$545.75 went to missions causes. Service activities were as follows:

Cooperated as a society with the following local organizations: W. C. T. U., Red Cross, and Bundles for Britain.

Contributed to the support of a local ministerial student and a boy at the Children's Home.

Provided baskets for the poor at Thanksgiving and sent gifts to each inmate of the County Home at Christmas.

Conducted weekly classes of instruction for Negro Church School teachers.

Helped to maintain a recreation center for soldiers.

We can see from this list that the mission of Central Methodist Church was changing to a more global outlook. The "soldiers" referred to were in the area training as a result of the United States' realization that the world situation might affect our country more directly in the near future. Pearl Harbor was still a distant place whose location was unknown to most Americans for a couple of months yet. When the Bishop's appointments were read to the annual conference in Winston-Salem on October 24, 1941, none could have predicted how superbly his choice of the Reverend Joe H. Armbrust would merge with the coming needs of Central Church and the city of Monroe for the next four years. Many have said Brother Armbrust was the right man at the right place at the right time.



1960

Retirement of Naomi Jones, Organist since mid 1930's.



Chapter Ten

THE FORTIES

1941 to 1950

As the momentous decade of the forties began, Dr. Combs was ending his tenure at Central and the Armbrust years were about to begin. Monroe and Union County were emerging from the Depression, though it was World War II that finally ended this economic crisis nationwide. The world abroad was in chaos, and while we felt for those innocently involved, especially in the British Isles, we hoped war was not in our future. Too many remembered the "war to end all wars" (World War I), and its horrors, to want an encore.

The Roosevelt administration instituted the draft in 1940, and other measures were taken to insure some measure of preparedness for what some officials saw as the inevitable entry of the United States into a global war. The local National Guard unit was mobilized the middle of September, 1940. Soldiers were trained with maneuvers in several southern states in 1940 and 1941. Union County (with Lancaster County, SC) was the center of the massive Carolinas maneuvers involving some 300,000 men for two months in the fall of 1941. The maneuvers covered some sixteen counties. Headquarters for General Leslie McNair was at the Monroe Country Club. The newspaper accounts at the time spoke of the Yankee soldiers enjoying southern hospitality and they "found out the Civil War really did end more than seventy years ago." With such a large influx of strangers, nobody was immune to their presence. Some formed lifelong friendships and romances. The 1940 population of Union County was less than 40,000 and that of Monroe was 6,475.

As the maneuvers ended formally at 4:20 p.m. on Friday, November 28, 1941, the Armbrust family was settling into its Monroe situation at Central Church, home for the next four eventful and busy years. The war touched every one and every institution, especially the church. An important event that put the war in our backyard was the opening of a large army training camp on March 7, 1942. Ray Shute, an active and influential layman in Central Church, was instrumental in bringing the camp to Monroe (and later in having the land and

facilities given to the city). The camp was named for Frank Sutton, the first from Union County to die in World War II and a member of First Baptist Church. He was a twenty-three year old Royal Canadian Air Force pilot shot down on December 7, 1941, over Libya, Northern Africa. Camp Sutton was designed to house and train 18,750 soldiers and was later expanded. Engineers were trained here, and in the latter stages of the war the camp housed prisoners of war from Germany and Italy.

If one consults only the quarterly conference records, not much information is available about the church's activities from the pastor's reports. Other reports let us know that Brother Armbrust was in the midst of all the activities and very much in charge. The January 21, 1942, first quarterly conference reports praise him for his interest, his attendance at meetings and his general involvement. The Church School report by W.Z. Faulkner states, "Our new pastor, Brother Armbrust, has already won the love and esteem of all our people and with his dynamic leadership, we feel that we can do anything we wish to do. It is a genuine pleasure to work with him. . . ." No report from Armbrust survives from this conference. Indeed many of his reports following are missing or are quite cryptic — one guesses he was too busy making progress to report it.

The next quarterly conference records are for the fourth quarter, dated October 7, 1942. The membership stood at 1040 (76 were nonresidents), an increase of 54 in a year. Armbrust reported 35 marriages performed and 532 calls in homes during the year. He was enthusiastic in his praise of the congregation and church officials for the fine work done that year. Betsy Lee, in her report on the work of the young people's department, refers to the soldier program and the curtailing of out-of-town meetings because of gasoline and tire rationing. (Rationing of gasoline, tires, sugar, meat, etc., brought the war to all families, and affected much more than the church program.) A listing of service activities for the women included weekly visits to the Camp Sutton Hospital and writing letters to mothers of soldiers attending our church regularly. The treasurer's annual summary reported total disbursements of \$9084.36 plus \$1718.75 in Benevolences.

The new church year, beginning in October, 1942, brought an associate pastor to Central Monroe for the first time. The Reverend Joe Caldwell actually began his work here in June, 1942, served here for two years four months, and was much loved.

We can mention only a few ways that Central was living up to its

full potential in the war years. The church was open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. and was heated all the time during cold weather. (The furnace boiler had to be replaced in the fall of 1943.) Phifer Hall proved to be adaptable and was used as a recreation facility (with shuffle board, ping pong tables, games, and writing tables). The church kitchen was available for soldiers' wives to prepare meals for their husbands. On the main floor of the church school building were several offices, open every day. A rental office, information bureau and employment service were available with two workers. The Recreation Committee headquarters was in the Associate Pastor's office. A lounge was available for soldiers' families to visit with friends and relatives and to rest after long journeys. The sanctuary was always open for meditation.

The Board of Stewards provided a fund for refreshments on Wednesday and Sunday nights. They granted the Reverend Armbrust as much time as necessary to serve the soldiers. Armbrust was named chairman of the Monroe Defense Recreation Committee when it was set up in January of 1942. This committee implemented nine recreation centers in Monroe and received \$113,000 from federal funds. Armbrust was also chairman of the Inter-Racial Committee and a member of the Army Emergency Relief Board. The addition of the Reverend Joe Caldwell to the staff was invaluable for the ongoing work.

We have a special file of Mr. Armbrust's papers, some not in very good condition, now in an acid-free box. These give some insight into his activities and thus the church involvement with the war effort and community actions. There are 318 papers, mostly letters from Armbrust or answers to his letters, plus three booklets. Less than ten of these apply directly to Central Methodist Church. One of these is a floor plan of Phifer Hall adapted for a recreation center for the soldiers.

There are 84 papers in 1942-43 when Armbrust was soliciting donations of money and goods for the "orphan soldiers" — those who would otherwise not be remembered during those Christmas seasons. Boxes were prepared for the soldiers and also for some of the patients at the 1000-bed hospital. Several 1943 letters asked that radios be donated for soldiers. Also in 1942-43 there are 28 papers concerned with the acute need for housing for soldiers' families. There was a rental office at Central Methodist Church. The available rental facilities in Monroe were so overtaxed that neighboring towns, mainly Charlotte and Lancaster, SC, were contacted for rental rooms,

apartments, and houses. Armbrust made a special effort on behalf of the colored soldiers' families. Correspondence with the Office of Price Administration implies that some rents and restaurant charges were not considered reasonable.

A playground fund financial records book was dated mostly 1944. There is a Monroe information directory dated August of 1942. It lists churches, civic clubs, businesses with services likely to be needed by soldiers and families, housing information, train and bus schedules, and organizations rendering service to the military.

By far the most numerous papers in number are from Armbrust's work as chairman of the local Defense Recreation Program. During 1942 almost 100 pages were concerned with getting two recreation facilities built, one for whites and one for colored, with government help. They were to be operated by the USO, the United Services Organization, and many locals volunteered to help. USO figures for July-December, 1942, reveal the dimensions of the program:

information inquiries	3,473
case work services999
club attendance94,500

These Federal Recreation Buildings were dedicated in 1943. The one for whites was at 502 North Main Street and was dedicated on April 17, 1943. The October 2 dedication service was held at the 1015 Winchester Ave. facility. In 1943 also is some correspondence, initiated by Armbrust, about the lack of fire escape exits for these and other facilities used for soldiers' recreation; it caused some modification of buildings. Later correspondence was sparse, as the programs were winding down in late 1944. The Defense Recreation Program was dissolved on September 14, 1945, a few weeks before Armbrust was to leave Central Church and retire.

In 1942 Mrs. J. H. Armbrust took over as president of the Woman's Society for three years. She proved an excellent choice to lead the ladies in these hectic war years. At the end of the church year in the fall of 1943, she reported on World Day of Prayer and mission study classes, along with an impressive service record: twenty women served as Gray Ladies in the camp hospital visitation, 68 women gave 2110 hours of work in the Red Cross surgical dressing rooms; and there was wide participation in the sale of stamps and bonds.

Dr. A. R. Kistler reported in September, 1943, to the fourth quarterly conference as lay leader that attendance was "good and the financial standing excellent." The pastor's report was fuller than usual. He

stated that he preached over one hundred sermons during the year, average attendance at midweek services was 83. Over 700 pastoral calls had been made in homes since he came to Central. During the year there were sixteen baptisms, forty-three marriages (each preceded by a counseling conference), and fourteen funeral services. The total membership of the church in uniform at that time was 143. The Roll of Honor plaque for the members of Central who served in the armed forces has been preserved and now hangs in the hall of the Educational Building upstairs; the list is basically in the order of their joining the armed services. (A copy of this list is included in the Appendix; two of the names are missing from the plaque but are included in the Appendix.)

After annual conference in October, 1943, the first quarterly conference was held on November 24. Lay leader S.H. Green said the board had adopted the budget to include "a much-deserved raise" of \$300 for the pastor's salary. He said, "The board has pledged its undivided support to Brother Armbrust in the continuation of the great work that he is doing for our church, our city, and our community." The church school superintendent also referred to "our seven-day-a-week pastor, Brother Armbrust and assistant pastor, Brother Caldwell" in a most favorable way. The pastor's report was only this: "Our work for the year opens auspiciously. The people are cooperative and the year ahead promises to be good and we anticipate a good year."

We are fortunate to have a scrapbook for the conference year 1943-1944 to supplement the official records during this historic period. The scrapbook contains local newspaper clippings about Central Church from October 15, 1943, to October 12, 1944. *The Monroe Enquirer* published on Mondays and Thursdays, the *Monroe Journal* on Tuesdays and Fridays. While the news was essentially the same, the features and social pages were different. Many residents of the county subscribed to both papers. The first part of the scrapbook was compiled by Miss Gladys Lathan until five days before her sudden death on May 30, 1944. Then Mrs. Grady (Rose) Doster finished out the year. It contains 94 pages and some 424 articles. The scrapbook itself is in poor condition (it is not on acid-free paper) but has been xeroxed and bound with acid-free cardboard — thus it is available for interested parties to peruse.

In March of 1944 the war really hit home to Central Church when the news was received that Lt. Linwood Brooks had been killed in action on March 8 in England. He and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Brooks, were members of Central. Brooks graduated from Monroe

High School in 1937, enlisted in early June of 1942, and was awarded his pilot wings in October of 1943. A memorial service was held on a Sunday afternoon in early June, and the Purple heart was given to the mother of Lt. Brooks. At that time there were 167 names on the church Roll of Honor. (The nephew and namesake of Lt. Brooks, the Rev. Linwood Cohn Brooks, son of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Brooks, is now a minister in the Western North Carolina Conference.) The Board of Stewards debated in July some type of memorial for Brooks and others who might also later make the supreme sacrifice; no decision was ever recorded, though surely the families wanted some way to memorialize their loved ones in the church.

Lt. James Warren Lemmond was killed on July 8, 1944. Son of Walter F. and Lula Mae Lemmond, James was born in Monroe on August 6, 1921. His wife, the former Carrie Broom, also survived him; there were no children. James entered service when the local National Guard was activated in 1940. After taking flight training, he was transferred to the 8th Air Corps. He volunteered for a mission over France and was killed. He is buried in a government cemetery in St. Laurent, France. His six brothers were: E.W., S.F., M.W., K.T., J.L., and V.R. Lemmond; his two sisters were: Mrs. Ruby L. Moore and Mrs. Frances L. Burgess.

Easter Sunday was April 9, 1944, and there was an appropriate service at the eleven o'clock service. There was an interdenominational sunrise service at the high school, sponsored by the young people of the city. Several of the pastors of the downtown churches were on the program. The Reverend Armbrust could not participate because of illness. The Reverend Mr. Caldwell preached at the eleven o'clock service in his absence. The next day the sanctuary was closed for painting and did not re-open until the service on Sunday, April 23.

In the second quarterly conference report dated May 8, 1944, a gift of \$2500 for tower bells was mentioned. A resolution thanking the donor was adopted at the March Board of Stewards meeting. Their installation, a gift of Mrs. Fred Huntley in memory of her late husband, was in time for the hundred-year anniversary celebration for Central Methodist Church. There was a special service of dedication held on June 25, 1944, for the Carillon Tower Bells. This was a gift for the whole town since the bells could be heard and enjoyed at some distance from the church.

Many present members remember Central's Centennial Celebration held from May 7 to 14, 1944. A number of special events and speakers marked the hundred-year history of the oldest Methodist

church in the city (though other county churches are older). The church published a small blue hard-back book for the commemoration; present members who have copies value these highly. The book contains a six-page history by Church Historian Lee Griffin, pictures of living former pastors, a description of the new Tower Bells, the inscriptions from the memorial windows, a listing of the church officials and centennial committees, the 1865 roster of church members, a financial chart from 1872-1943 showing a total amount of \$665,943 raised by Central in those 71 years, several pages of pictures of groups in the church, a summary of Soldier Activities, and a discussion of The Church Today.

The section on The Church Today has a good description of various organizations within the church and how they were functioning in the wartime conditions of 1944. The woman's work had always been important and the author states that since 1872 the women in the church had raised over \$46,000. Currently its annual budget was \$1200, with \$700 going to missions and \$500 for local work. Membership in the Woman's Society was 203. In noting the importance of the music program to the church, mention was made that the Children's Choir, under the direction of Miss Bessie Reid Houston, sang one Sunday night per month, and there were also a Men's Chorus and a Mixed Quartette. Sunday evenings were more informal and included "old-time Gospel" singing. The soldiers especially enjoyed that; many of them shared their musical talents with the church. The report on the Church Board of Christian Education mentioned that fourteen people from our church attended summer conferences at Lake Junaluska. This was before the lake site was THE place for many conferences, including annual conference. Vacation Church school was held each summer at Central and a children's story hour was conducted one afternoon a week. The youth work was planned by a youth council which met monthly; they met in Phifer Hall each Sunday evening for fellowship and refreshments, after which they were responsible for the worship part of the Sunday evening meeting. A special effort was made to include soldiers in the total program of the church. The Boy Scout Troop No. 6, organized in 1939, was under the direction of Mr. W.C. Austin and had a membership of 57. Girl Scout Troop No. 1, organized two years previously (1942), was under the leadership of Mrs. W.C. Austin and had a membership of 68.

The above-mentioned scrapbook has much detail on the centennial celebration. The scrapbook is also a source of information on the casualties from the war. Three more service deaths were reported

(during the scrapbook year), all in France after D-Day. Pvt. Henry Milton died June 18; he was 23 years old and had made his home with his aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. L.H. Couch, after the death of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. H.H. Milton. He was survived by his wife, the former Clara Boone of Monroe. His memorial service was held at Central Church on September 17. Capt. James P. Morgan died July 19 and was memorialized at Central on September 10. He was the son of the late F.M. Morgan and Mrs. Pet Trull Morgan; he was also survived by his wife, the former Hallie Lee of Marshville. Lt. Thomas Percy Laney was killed on August first; his memorial service was held on September 14 at Central. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Walter Laney; his wife was the former Martha Frasher of Barnesville, Ohio.

At a called meeting in July the Board approved the pastor's vacation for the month of August. It also heard that the parsonage plumbing was in bad need of repair. In August it approved the \$110 cost of running a new water line into the parsonage. In September one item on the Board's agenda was that young Joe Armbrust (who was about 16 years old at the time) was using the organ for practice and that there were some complaints. (Joe was hired to play for a church in Charlotte for the month of July, 1944. He is now an accomplished musician and has served several churches as minister of music.) The board voted to allow any student of music to practice on the organ. The use of the organ has always been a source of some difference of opinion. The organist understandably feels responsible for the care of such an expensive instrument. Others feel that young musicians should be encouraged. About twenty years later the same situation occurred; the organ was not available for indiscriminant use at that time and was kept under lock and key.

Also in September Mr. Armbrust announced that Joe Caldwell would not be returning as associate pastor. He suggested that the church hire a young lady as Religious Director and Social Secretary of the church; he estimated the cost to be about \$1800 per year. The pastor's salary was \$4000 per year. The choir director and organist received \$300 annually. In November after annual conference, the increased request for World Service caused some shifting of budget amounts and the salary for a Religious Director was reduced to \$1550, leaving the total budget at \$12,941.

The October 4, 1944, Treasurer's Annual Summary showed current expenses of \$11,049.48 and Benevolences of \$999. Not listed in the current expenses or budget items were: a carpet fund (in U.S. Government bonds) of \$2164 and \$5536.18 collected for the special

centennial fund, special memorial gifts and money received for soldier work. The membership increased from 1065 to 1079, as reported to the annual conference in October, 1944. The first quarterly conference held November 29, 1944, does not contain any reports, just the names of the officials of the church and church school. There is no associate pastor listed.

Two notes of interest appear in the *Monroe Journal* in the fall of 1944. The First Baptist Church congregation voted in October to buy the lot at the south end of Main Street to build a new church. They had been on the corner of South Main and Correll Streets since the 1880's. They now occupy almost the whole block bounded by Morrow Ave., Hayne St., Houston St. and Parker St., with their lovely sanctuary marking the south end of Main Street while the new courthouse is at the north end six blocks away. The other news item was a humorous account of the problem of wasps in the tower and sanctuary of Central Methodist. It was reported that on Sunday, October 29, also at the Wednesday night service, the wasps were particularly restless. It was said that the congregation slapped and fanned and ducked while trying to listen to the preacher, who had his own problems of concentration. A huge wasp darted down from the ceiling like a dive bomber, lit on Brother Armbrust's bald head, and skidded off to the floor stone dead. The friends of the deceased took note of his fate and desisted in their attentions to the hairless globe, enabling Mr. Armbrust to finish his sermon in relative peace.

There were five other service men killed from Central, according to the ten gold stars on the Roll of Honor. One was Carl Leap, who was married, lived in an apartment on Washington St., and was manager of Newberry's Five and Ten Cent Store on the corner of Main and Franklin Streets (before and/or at the beginning of the war). He was from out of state and we have tried to find out more about him and his death. He is thought to have been drafted by his home draft board and, because of his placement on the Roll of Honor, probably entered service at the end of 1942 or the beginning of 1943. Carl H. Leap and his wife were listed as new members in the October 15, 1941, quarterly conference report by the pastor, Dr. Combs.

The other four men all died in 1945. Lt. James Henry Copeland, son of Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Copeland, was born in Monroe on December 19, 1914. He was married to Mildred Sox of Columbia, SC, and they had one son, James H. Copeland, Jr. Lt. Copeland entered service in 1940 with the local National Guard and was later assigned to the 134th Infantry Regiment, 35th Infantry Division, Third Army, in Europe. He

was killed on January 13, 1945, in Belgium while fighting in the Battle of the Bulge. He is buried in the Military Cemetery in Luxemburg. His brother was John Tappan Copeland, and his sister was Mrs. Mary C. Violi.

Pfc. John Dunham Futch, Jr., son of John D. and Emma Julia Plyler Futch, was born in Monroe on January 31, 1923. He entered the Army on January 15, 1943, and served in the 511th Parachute Infantry. He died of wounds received February 5, 1945, while fighting in the Battle of Manila, Phillipine Islands. He was later buried in the Monroe City Cemetery. His brother was Louis Kendrick Futch and his sister was Emma Doris Futch.

William Marsh Hill, was born in Monroe on December 18, 1925, son of Mr. and Mrs. Roy J. Hill. He entered the Navy in December of 1943, trained in Naval Aviation Ordinance, and was assigned to the *USS Bismarck*. On February 21, 1945, his ship was bombed in the battle for the Phillipine Islands and he went down with the ship. His sister was Dorothy Hill Brooks.

Ray Little Lingle, son of Jacob Ray and Victoria Howie Lingle, was born in Ayden, NC, on July 31, 1921, and reared in Monroe. He entered the Army Air Force in April of 1943 and served as a radio operator on an Army Air Transport plane in India. He was killed in a plane accident near Calcutta, India, on October 12, 1945. He was later buried in the Monroe City Cemetery. He had one brother, Sgt. Jimmy Lingle. His was the last of the service-related deaths for Central in World War II.

Ongoing business and budget items dominate the next few board meetings in the fall of 1944. For a number of months (most of the war years) the treasurer reported that one twelfth of the budget had been collected the previous month, so collections did not seem to be a problem. Indeed once or twice a surplus was reported. Most often repairs on the church alleviated the problem of excess money. At a January 14, 1945, meeting the members voted to raise \$4000 for the Crusade for Christ currently in progress. The women gave \$1300, probably included in the \$4000 above. In March the amount raised was reported as \$4727.50 for the Crusade. A Cub Scout group was formed in mid-1945.

By September, 1945, the property committee had made a tour of the parsonage and found it in need of extensive repairs. Improvements suggested and approved were: two bedroom suites of furniture; four rooms upstairs to be re-plastered and painted and the floors sanded; four rooms and hall downstairs to be painted and the floors sanded; the

basement enlarged and floor cemented; new heating plant with semi-air conditioning and registers to be installed upstairs. A resolution praising the Reverend Armbrust for his four busy years at Central was approved by the board on October 8. He and Mrs. Armbrust retired to Myrtle Beach upon leaving Monroe. A committee was appointed to welcome the new pastor.

The Reverend Armbrust's October 3 report showed an increase in membership from 1079 to 1147 during his last year at Central.

At a called meeting October 16, 1945, the committee appointments were read and a budget of \$13,266 adopted. The Director of Religious Education salary appeared as \$1500. Evidently Miss Betty Foster had been hired some time before May; the first mention of her was in the minutes for May 7 where the painting of her office was approved. A chair was purchased for her in June for \$18.50. At the December 3 meeting a new typewriter, costing \$131.25, was approved for purchase for her, and by January 7 a mimeograph machine had been purchased at a cost of \$104.21.

A new pastor, the Reverend George B. Clemmer, was welcomed by the board at its November 5, 1945, meeting; he was to remain only one year. Budget pledges did not reach \$13,000. The Reverend Mr. Clemmer thanked all for the cordial reception shown him and Mrs. Clemmer. When the Clemmers moved in on Friday, October 19, a week after the appointments were read out at annual conference, the work on the parsonage was still in progress; the furnace installation was to be complete by the middle of November. A bulletin board was approved for hanging near the pastor's study. The Reverend Clemmer suggested using a church bulletin and the Board approved. He was pleased to find a unified church, free of debt, and all departments well organized. He pledged himself and the church to be used in welcoming home those who had been away in service and working in war industries. One hundred ninety-three names were on the Roll of Honor; the ten gold stars represented those who made the supreme sacrifice.

By January, 1946, the parsonage work was complete at a cost of \$2740. A committee was working on how to adopt the Service Honor Roll to indicate that the soldiers had returned. When there was a request from the Young Adults for improvements in their meeting room, the Reverend Clemmer stated that the church building had several leaks and needed a number of other repairs. After discussing the matter of heat in the church, he expressed concern for the spiritual temperature of the church, "indicating that we need to re-kindle the

fires and have a re-awakening." The matter of repairs was studied and discussed through the end of April, with the church leaking all this time. Someone to do the work was the problem; these repairs were finally completed in August. Other repairs, such as re-plastering would have to wait until materials were available (many things were scarce due to the war). The resignation of Miss Foster was announced, as of June 15, 1946. The search committee expected to have to pay as much as \$2000 for a replacement. A resolution dated September 17, 1946, praised the demeanor and effectiveness of the Reverend Clemmer and asked that he be returned to Central.

The September 30 meeting of the board, just before annual conference, was eventful. After the regular business, the Reverend Mr. Clemmer challenged the church to some ambitious goals. He thought it important to increase the budget and also to plan to raise \$15,000 to \$20,000 to make improvements and repairs to the church building. Before he excused himself for the board to discuss the matters, he stated that the reaction of the board would determine to some extent his willingness to return to Monroe. After discussion the board told Clemmer that they would do their best but felt they could not really commit themselves to such an ambitious financial program on such short notice. The Reverend George B. Clemmer was not re-assigned to Central Church.

A new budget was adopted at the October 13, 1946, in the amount of \$14,715. Each member was going to be asked to increase his pledge by at least twenty per cent. The new pastor, the Reverend Dr. Edgar Parke Billups was present for the first time at the November 4 meeting where a surplus of \$954.87 was reported as collected in excess over the previous year's budget. Dr. Billups was to remain for four years. C.D. Roberts had replaced S.H. Greene as chairman of the Board of Stewards; Claude Eubanks had replaced Edwin Niven as Finance Chairman. The budget had been overpledged by \$560. The decision was made to start on a systematic plan of refurbishing the church two rooms at a time. A new Director of Christian Education, Miss Margaret Correll, was introduced to the board at the February 3, 1947, meeting; she left before the year was out to accept a teaching position in Hickory. The church tower had been repaired and an electric cross was to be installed, to be given by the descendants of John Shute in his memory. In March the board voted to provide \$6 per week for the young people's Sunday evening refreshments. Also it voted its appreciation for the offer of Mrs. A.M. Secrest to give visual education equipment to the church in memory of her late husband.

At the September 1, 1947 meeting the board agreed to accept the generous offer of J. Ray Shute to erect a youth building as a memorial to this son Ray III, such building to meet with the approval of an architect and the building committee. The Shute building was located behind the parsonage and faced on Morgan St. Also in September Edwin Niven was elected Board Chairman. The board met five times in September trying to wind up the financial year in the black; they ended with a surplus of \$1300. Early in 1947 Central Methodist Church broadcast its morning service once a month on the new radio station WMAP; Sunday school was also broadcast. Mrs. Reece Winchester was replaced by Mrs. Clyde E. Helms as president of the Woman's Society.

The matter of repairs and improvements was again on the agenda that fall of 1947. Nick Didow's estimate of the cost was \$9700. No work was to be started until specifically authorized by the board. This was a recurring theme at subsequent board meetings. However, the pipes under Phifer Hall did not wait for a committee to decide to repair them. They broke in February; part of the cement floor even had to be replaced. By that time water was dripping from the tower. At the May meeting Claude Eubanks reported that \$19,000 had been pledged for church renovation and \$11,000 had been collected. The price of a new roof was being negotiated. The Shute Memorial Building was to be dedicated on May 4 at 2 o'clock. Mr. Niven gave a report on the progress on the Home for the Aged; he urged the members to drive out to see the completed buildings — presumably this was the original Methodist Home on Shamrock Drive in Charlotte. The Mothers' Day collection was to go to the home (it was later reported to amount to \$272.75) The regular budget was consistently running behind on collections, several hundred dollars each month.

As required by the Discipline, a church conference was called for March 7, 1948, at the 11 o'clock service to explain the need for a building program to the congregation so that they might vote on it. The committee invited the congregation to tour the facilities so they could see for themselves the need for repairs and improvement. The vote to proceed was unanimous.

The report on church improvement was complete by May 31, 1948, and they were soliciting bids. The roof was in much worse shape than originally thought and the organ needed extensive repairs. The roof cost about \$4100 and the organ \$6100. The organ was removed August 1 and was expected to be ready by Easter. The city was asked to remove the parking meters in front of the church. In August the contract for

Educational Building improvements was let to J.S. Stearns for \$10,461.

The idea of rotating terms for the Board of Stewards was discussed; it was decided to initiate it for the new year starting in October, 1948. One fourth of the membership would be retired each year, to be eligible for re-election after one year off. The new board chairman was to be James Marsh and finance chairman was J.W. Meinus. The new budget of \$17,951 was approved, including a \$600 raise for the preacher. Annual Conference met September 27; Dr. Billups was returned to Central as requested by the board.

Woman's Society president Mrs. J. E. Glasgow reported on the many projects the women were involved in, such as packages of clothing for European relief, parsonage furniture, meals served for church groups, flowers for church meetings, supplies for Cherokee Indians, and helping with the polio hospital located in Camp Sutton facilities. The polio epidemic was so widespread that many activities, especially for young people under sixteen, were curtailed. The radio station was used to good advantage for "Sunday School of the Air." Public schools were late starting and ending for the 1948-1949 school year.

The new year 1948-49 started with the October 4 meeting at which Miss Betty Ruth Parker, from White House, Tenn., the new (as of October 1) Director of Christian Education, was introduced. Early in 1949 it was reported that a new carpet for the sanctuary would cost about \$4000 and that the roof was being repaired. The preacher complained it was taking too long to heat up the sanctuary — the furnace was to be checked. The J.R. Shute family had offered to pay for changes in the pulpit area and the re-lighting of the sanctuary in memory of their mother. Bids for painting inside and outside the church were attached to the board minutes for April. In June Dr. Billups was granted five weeks leave to attend Northwestern University during the summer.

Mrs. W. A. Ingram, president of the Woman's Society, reported these activities to the fourth quarterly conference on July 18, 1949: flowers for all services, volunteers at the polio hospital, material given to Negro churches, furnishings for Shute Hall, blinds and curtains for the parsonage, water heater and other furnishings for the church kitchen, suppers and lunches served, volunteers for Red Cross blood bank, volunteers for the city recreation program, and church bazaar.

The Treasurer's Annual Report showed a total of \$16,533.73 received. This did not include the building improvement funds. The pastor's salary was \$4800.

As the conference year and the decade of the forties ended, the need

for repairs on the church building kept coming up — and on into the fifties. It would necessitate some difficult decisions in the days ahead about the future of Central Methodist Church.



Rear of Sanctuary in 1902 Church, Showing Annex.



Chapter Eleven

PRELUDE TO A NEW CHURCH

1950-1970

Central began the decade of the fifties with Dr. Edgar Parke Billups, whose effective ministry was from 1946 to 1950, in his fourth year. During these four years the church experienced a new enthusiasm and vitality as the returning soldiers took their places along with their young families in the corporate life of the church and community. Dr. Billups was enthusiastic in his fourth (his last) quarterly conference report dated August 8, 1950. In reviewing the year's work he stated that Miss Betty Ruth Parker had resigned on May 15 as Director of Christian Education, and on June 12 was married to Mr. William Youngblood of the Mississippi Conference (presumably a preacher). She had not been replaced. He reviewed the repairs and improvements done to the church at a cost of about \$35,000, which was raised in cash. The sanctuary was re-carpeted; the old carpet went to the Negro Methodist church (nothing indicates which church). Eight long (twelve-and-a-half-foot) tables were bought for Phifer Hall — they were to be well used for suppers, etc. The church was proud to be debt-free. He mentioned the division of the youth fellowship into two groups, senior and intermediate. He praised the Woman's Society, the Sunday school, and other groups in the church. Mrs. W.A. Ingram ended her two years as WSCS president with a list of twenty-one projects in which the women had been involved. Included were these items new for the church: kneeling cushions, communion linen, pulpit cloths and Bible markers, and for the kitchen added china, silver, linen and glassware. These were in addition to their other projects, such as Cherokee Indians, Red Cross, recreation program, college students, vacation Bible school, Bibles to Japan, clothing overseas, county home, and prison inmates.

There were personnel changes early in the decade of the 1950's. Miss Parker's salary was increased to \$2400 per year before she resigned. In April of 1950 the Board of Stewards offered \$3000 per year

to Mr. Kenneth Fansler to be both Director of Religious Education and Minister of Music; he considered the offer but declined because his Winston-Salem salary had been increased. Phyllis Niven was hired as secretary for the summer at \$40 per week to take Miss Parker's place; Phyllis was a member of the church and a college student so the position was not permanent. The main change in personnel, of course, was the end of Dr. Billups' four years at Central at the mid-September annual conference and the coming of the Reverend W. Quay Grigg. Also in October, 1950, Doris Hill Cornelius was offered the DRE job at \$150 per month. Doris was to be a valued employee for the next 28 years. In August, 1952, there was a new janitor with a salary of \$35 per week; his hours were 8 to 5 with two hours for lunch (it is not known whether that was for five days or six days a week).

Changes were brewing in the music program of the church. Miss Bessie Reid Houston had directed a children's choir since the early 1940's. When she asked for 25 new song books @ 80 cents in January, 1950, the board took up a collection at their meeting that yielded \$21.50. New choir vestments in February cost \$288.11. The April offer to Mr. Fansler that included the title of Minister of Music implied that Naomi Jones (Mrs. Zeb Jones) was perhaps thinking of giving up at least part of her job as organist-choir director which she had held since about 1937. In May of 1950 she requested a 90-day leave of absence and implied that she might not return (she did return). During her absence Kenneth Jones (no relation) was paid \$5 per Sunday. Thirty-five new Cokesbury hymnals were bought in November for congregational use. In December the Reverend Mr. Grigg recommended a young people's choir; the next year in December he renewed the request. By February of 1952 this choir was finally organized by Doris Morgan and Betsy Lee. In June, 1951, the Board approved \$100 to purchase lightweight robes for the choir; the \$15 overage was paid in August by the choir. In June, 1952, new chairs were finally approved for the choir @ \$5.95. Some of the stewards donated fans for the choir loft in July 1952 (also for the offices of the pastor and the secretary). Mrs. Jones' salary was raised to \$75 per month with a month's vacation. Choir personnel changes were delayed for a while. New Methodist hymnals were published and the church bought fifty of these in January of 1954; because of their larger size the hymn racks had to be adapted.

In mid-1952 there were some changes in the makeup of the Board of Stewards. Three classifications were instituted: the elected stewards, the three trustees and the ex-officio members. The latter included the

pastor, the DRE, the chairmen of the Education Committee and the Missions Committee, lay member of the annual conference, charge lay leader, church treasurer, and the presidents of the Woman's Society of Christian Service, of the Methodist Youth Fellowship, of the Men's Fellowship and of the Young Adult Fellowship.

During the Reverend Grigg's two years at Central he seldom missed a meeting of the Board of Stewards, but his name is mentioned in the minutes usually only as giving the opening prayer. The use of church facilities posed a problem, as secular uses were often requested. The board voted to restrict the use to church functions but did make exceptions. In 1952 the Garden Club held a district meeting at Central.

Early in 1950 there was an improvement program in progress at Lake Junaluska and each church was asked to contribute. The Lake Junaluska Assembly was the dream of Dr. George R. Stuart, growing out of Methodist Episcopal Church, South, meetings in 1900, 1907, and 1908. The site near Waynesville was chosen in 1910 and stock was sold. The Assembly grounds were purchased, a dam built to make a lake, and an open auditorium was built before the 1913 official opening at the Second Layman's Missionary Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The location was named for Chief Junaluska, one of the Cherokees "removed" to Oklahoma Territory in 1838 along the "Trail of Tears." This privately-financed venture went through a troubled financial period until Dr. William A. Lambeth, pastor of High Point's Wesley Memorial Church was selected in May, 1936, by the bishops to raise the \$100,000 needed to pay off the indebtedness — he accomplished this by September of the same year. Excellent programs were held during all the years in spite of the financial difficulties, and many private homes were built. It is today a most desirable place of residence, especially for retired preachers. On its twenty-fifth anniversary in 1938 it was declared debt-free, with a valuation of \$300,000, and presented to the church at the last General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. When the 1939 unification was accomplished, it became the property of The Methodist Church. After its transfer to the Southeastern Jurisdiction in 1948, development dramatically progressed with increased capital improvements and operational expenses. As a result of the Ninth World Methodist Conference meeting at Lake Junaluska in 1956 (probably the largest world meeting of Methodists ever held), the fame of the assembly spread far and wide. Since 1957 all the annual conferences of the Western North Carolina Conference have been held there, as well as many other meetings of the WNCC

and the Southeastern Jurisdiction. It was not until 1972 that the needed financial undergirding was finally established. In 1976 the responsibility for programming was finally coordinated. The area is in constant use (except in the winter) for all kinds of meetings and conferences. There is a great deal of choice in housing and eating establishments. The western part of North Carolina has attracted other denominations in addition to the Methodists: Presbyterians at Montreat, Baptists at Ridgecrest, Episcopalians at Kanuga Lake, Lutherans at Lutheridge, and the YMCA at Blue Ridge.

Central's regular budget went from \$19,496.50 in November, 1949, to over \$52,400 ten years later. The 1949 pastor's salary was \$5000 and in 1959 was \$6500 with \$600 for travel expenses. The Mission Special was \$1200 in 1950; it went to Ft. National school in North Africa. Money was sent to the school for a number of years. Later in the 1950's the Mission Special, coinciding with the Easter season, raised \$2400; half went to Ft. National and half to Benton Heights Methodist Church for expansion.

At his first Board of Stewards meeting the Reverend Grigg discussed how the board should operate. The chairman was Kermit Starnes, succeeded by James A. Marsh in September, 1951. The rotation system for stewards had been in effect for several years so that one third of the membership rotated off each year. There were forty-two stewards in the early 1950's. The committees listed were: Board of Education, Membership, Pastoral Relations, Audit, Board of Missions and Church Extension, Finance, Hospital and Homes, Nominations, Records, Stewardship, and the Committee on Cooperations. When there was a budget shortfall or need for extra money (such as \$15,000 for Methodist colleges in December of 1951), it seems the board divided up the congregational families and canvassed. In September, 1952, J. Hamp Price became the new board chairman. The committees listed included: Music, Property, Hospital and homes, Good Literature, and Temperance. The value of the church property totalling \$235,000 remained the same through most of the 1950's; it was broken down into \$200,000 for the church building, \$19,000 for the parsonage, \$6000 for the youth building (Shute Hall), and \$10,000 for the organ, tower bells, and parsonage furnishings. In spite of the board resolution requesting the bishop to return the Reverend Mr. Grigg, he was assigned to a church in Mocksville. He and Mrs. Grigg are fondly remembered.

After fifty years of steady, sometimes hard, use (thirty years for the educational building), Central Church's buildings and parsonage

were wearing out — this did not seem to be anticipated by the congregation. Repair requests were dealt with as they came up. No plan for improvements seemed to be in operation. Soon after the Reverend Mr. Grigg arrived, he complained that the sanctuary was not warm. The Property Committee fixed windows and installed weatherstripping. In February of 1951 water was leaking in a downstairs Sunday school room; repairs also were needed at the parsonage. The property committee inspected and found the buildings in worse shape than expected. The parsonage repair estimate was \$1990 and \$925 for the Sunday school rooms, with more estimates to come later. When the figure of \$7500 for all repairs was finalized, a congregational meeting was called in late April to get approval and decide on the financing. By June \$6678 had been pledged for repairs and the work had begun. Downspouts were fixed and dirt was banked against the wall to stop water seepage. The organ was repaired and a new lock with only three keys was supposed to limit unauthorized use. A used piano was bought for \$100 for Phifer Hall. Shute Hall was to be updated for use by the youth. It needed water installed, rubber tile on the floor, walls painted and an oil heater; cost: \$427.95. The church tower repair bill in September, 1952, of \$266.41 seemed to be in addition to the other amount. The Reverend Grigg requested a movie screen so the church wouldn't have to borrow one. He also announced that he paid for the installation of a washing machine at the parsonage; though he did not ask for repayment, the board voted to reimburse him.

The repairs listed above had been completed before the arrival in October, 1952, of the new preacher, the Reverend Abram J. Cox. A new furnace for the church was debated in January of 1953, but it was early 1955 before a new oil furnace replaced the old coal furnace at a cost of \$17,000. The first power lawn mower was purchased in April, 1953; it was a used one. Also purchased then were 135 new chairs for the redecorated Phifer Hall. Fans were borrowed on approval in June, 1953, to see if they would help in the sanctuary. In September the board learned the parsonage needed a new furnace; a new oil furnace was bought in late 1953, and several rooms were re-plastered and painted. In December, 1953, a new oil heater was put in the pastor's study; the old one went to the choir room. Seepage in the kitchen was reported in February of 1954. The stained glass windows needed repair in May. They had to be removed and sent to High Point; this was completed during the first part of 1956. In June, 1954, there was a motion to use the reserve money to air condition the sanctuary; bids

received in September ranged from \$25,646 to \$19,195. The board decided to wait till spring and get pledges (rather than compete with budget pledging in September-October for the church year starting October 1). Termites were found in the basement about this time.

The monthly board minutes are fairly complete for the 1950's. The quarterly conference records most often consisted of first and fourth quarters, some not very complete. The pastor's report usually contained the names of those who died, those who joined the church and those who transferred their membership. Some of the pastors' reports are quite detailed. The Reverend Cox usually had an optimistic report but let the reports of the officers of the church, including the chairman of the Board of Stewards, tell about the progress in detail. The board was first called the Official Board in the December 1, 1952, minutes. Since there was no form for board chairman to fill out, the board chairman probably filed a report to the quarterly conference only at the urging of the pastor — and some pastors urged more than others.

In his first quarterly conference report, dated January 24, 1954, (for his second year at Central), the Reverend Cox began, "Recently the *Charlotte Observer* carried two items — gone above the other. The first stated: 'Church Office in Monroe Robbed'. The other said, 'Cox Leaves for Cuban Crusade'. So far as the pastor knows there is no connection between the two." When the Reverend Cox was invited to be a participant in the International Mission to Cuba in January, 1954, the board not only gave him permission but paid his expenses. His brief report subsequently declared the trip a success.

The Woman's Society of Christian Service was universally praised by the pastors, the board chairmen and other officials. Mrs. W. A. Ingram reported to the fourth quarterly conference in September, 1951, that the WSCS had 260 members, including 28 for the Wesleyan Service Guild. Out of \$2382.89 total disbursements, almost \$1100 was sent to the district treasurer. On a local level, they added equipment to the church kitchen. To the parsonage they gave an electric water heater, curtains, and a bedroom suite. The departing Billups family received a gift of silver from them. Mrs. Ray Lingle was the next WSCS president; in July, 1952, she reported the society had added more furnishings to the parsonage, and gifted the Griggs on their silver anniversary. The WSCS list of services included the usual: serving supper, flowers for the sanctuary, youth group activities, remembering college students and county home "inmates". Other services included helping with the city recreation program and the Red Cross

blood bank. One of the money-making projects was an annual bazaar. Mrs. Jesse R. Cook served two years as WSCS President. She reported in July, 1953, that they had contributed toward a television set for a shut-in; these sets would have been rather rare at that time. In 1953 they sent twelve boxes of clothing to Korea; the Board of Stewards agreed to pay the postage. By 1955 clothing was also being sent to Cherokee. Mrs. J.E. Glasgow served as WSCS President in 1955, followed by Mrs. Ward Broom in 1956. Mrs. David J. Gordon served from 1957-1959; her October, 1958 report mentioned prayer groups for the success of the Billy Graham Crusade (in Charlotte), also \$50 for a Girl Scout troop.

Most of the reports after the November, 1952, arrival of the Reverend Cox refer to the sustained good attendance at services. The Men's Fellowship averaged 60-80 men at their monthly meeting. Several reports praised the sermons and implied church attendance was due directly to the pastor's efforts. The reports from the Reverend Mr. Cox were always upbeat, optimistic, and generous in praising the efforts of the different organizations of the church. In February, 1954, the board approved nursery expenses of \$125-\$150 per year, the amount to be used for a hired sitter and refreshments during the Sunday morning services. This was a measure of the increased attendance. By May an additional sitter was needed because of the number of children left there during the service. The need for a piano for the nursery department in August was referred to the young adult Sunday school class that met in Shute Hall. This class became known as the Shute-Plyler class; about 1960 it was so named for the Shute Hall meeting place and for Walter G. Plyler, a contemporary of the class members, who died in December, 1959. There is no record in the Committee on Education reports to indicate the exact date the class was started.

As L. S. Presson took over as chairman of the Board of Stewards from W. B. Love in October of 1954, much of the board meeting discussion was on physical problems of the church. Several companies had inspected for termites in the church, found a good infestation, and submitted bids. There was also concern about moth damage to the organ. Both problems were to be solved by competitive bids. In December the property committee reported that repairs to the ten pianos were in progress and would cost \$400. Shute Hall was the only class without a piano and Charlie Hunley offered to pay for a used one; the offer was, of course, accepted.

After much discussion over a period of years, the sanctuary was

finally air conditioned in the summer of 1955. The total cost was \$17,360, of which \$1000 came out of a savings account at the Building and Loan Association. The rest was raised by subscription, an additional amount over the regular pledges for the church budget. By September it was obvious that the noise of the air conditioning system was such that a public address system would be needed. It was installed in January of 1956; the cost was projected to be between \$300 and \$360 but the final cost was not recorded.

The church was growing, outgrowing its facilities. The nursery was especially crowded. There was serious consideration regarding the tearing down Shute Hall and building a three-story educational building in that space. The permission of the Shute family was sought and received. There was more discussion to come on what to do about the additional space needed.

Membership of 1165 was reported at the fourth quarterly conference in June, 1955. The Methodist Men's Fellowship became Methodist Men and continued to thrive. The conference year was moved to earlier in the summer, making a 'short year' from October 1, 1956 to June 1, 1957. The annual conference was held in June rather than September. The May 14, 1957, annual conference report of the pastor (the last for the Reverend Cox) ended with Future Plans:

'Many of the plans for future expansion of the work of this church will be indicated by various committees; However, I would like to outline briefly the building and expansion program.

1. The financial campaign will be launched in October.
2. A new parsonage will be the first unit of construction.
3. The old parsonage will be used for educational purposes.
4. The new educational building will be built when money is available.
5. Renovation of the Sanctuary and old educational building.'

During the 1956-1960 pastorate of the Reverend Lee Spencer, a number of forward steps were taken. A full-time Director of Religious Education, Miss Ethel Jolliff (later Mrs. Jack Carr) was added to the church staff in the summer of 1956. Mrs. Cornelius became Director of Church Activities and later church treasurer when Mrs. Kate Phifer Capehart resigned this position after 31 years of continuous service. Mrs. Capehart resigned in September, 1956, but remained an active and interested church member until her death in 1971.

In a newspaper interview in 1965 Mrs. Capehart recalled her years in welfare work which started in 1932, in the depths of the Depression. She was one of the members of Monroe's churches who met

regularly to disburse contributions to the needy. Because of the Depression, the need was too great for this type of volunteer help. The county's Superintendent of Welfare, James Marsh, asked her to become a full-time social worker. She accepted and served for over twenty years. Her salary was \$50 a month; the first month's salary bought her a car, in which she travelled all over the county. Fortunately, Mrs. Capehart was not completely dependent on her salary. She was one of the best known and most respected women in the county. On one of her forays in the county Miss Kate visited with a black woman who was doing the family wash outdoors in a black iron pot. The woman was using a pewter pitcher to add water to the pot. On closer inspection, Mrs. Capehart recognized the pitcher as part of the old communion set that Central Church had given to a black church a number of years before when Central acquired a new one. Mrs. Capehart bought the pewter set back from the woman, and it is now one of Central's oldest artifacts.

Also during these years of the fifties, the first phase of an extensive building program was initiated and a building fund drive conducted. A special planning committee had been appointed by Chairman Presson soon after Mr. Spencer's arrival, chaired by Walter B. Love Jr. Their report to the board in December, 1956, urged the board not to think of just relieving the crowded conditions on a temporary basis. At the February, 1957, board meeting the Reverend Lee Spencer reported he was trying to secure the services of an architect at no cost to the church. Also he thanked the three ladies' classes for consolidating and giving up their classroom space so that the Children's Department could expand. The Reverend Lee Spencer challenged the church to plan for the future and think in terms of goals for the quadrennium. His proposed program was three-fold: church attendance, tithing, and building. In April, 1957, the board heard a report from the building committee and voted to aim at collecting \$300,000 over a five-year period for a building program, with the first pledges to be solicited in October. A cadre of informed leaders would present this to the congregation in small groups. The goal was to raise \$60,000 per year for each of five years and have a pay-as-you-go plan of expansion.

Other church business continued. In September, 1957, the board voted permission for Mrs. A. M. Secrest to use the church kindergarten facilities temporarily for teaching retarded children. The next month some of the pastor's remarks were of increasing racial tensions both locally and nationally. In March, 1958, Ethel Jolliff resigned her

position as Director of Church Activities in anticipation of her upcoming marriage to one of Central's members, Jack Carr. The position was offered to Doris Cornelius who had spent her own time and money studying during several summers. Miss Phyllis Helms was hired to be church secretary and treasurer. Mr. Spencer received permission to hire a Duke student for ten weeks in the summer. The Western North Carolina Conference launched a campaign in the fall of 1958 to raise \$3,000,000 for higher education.

A new parsonage at another location was to be the first phase of the building program. The 150 by 200 foot lot on Lakewood Drive was approved at the May 5, 1958, board meeting. A lovely new nine-room brick colonial parsonage was completed and dedicated in November, 1959. Bishop Nolan B. Harmon and the Reverend Walter J. Miller, District Superintendent, were present for the dedication. The Lee Spencer family was the first to occupy the home and graciously entertained the congregation and townspeople at an open house on November 8, 1959. With the completion of the parsonage, the old parsonage (beside the church, facing Windsor Street) was converted into an educational building for the children and was known as the Children's Building. But with the growth of the Sunday School attendance the facilities were still inadequate. The church proper was in bad condition with a roof that continually leaked in spite of constant repair; there was also termite damage. There was a request to prune the trees outside the church door so that the lower limbs would not knock the women's hats off.

The Methodist Youth Fellowship was extremely active under the direction of Doris Cornelius. Mrs. Cornelius was a mentor for almost three decades of Central's youth. Indeed the MYF was THE place to go for many of the youth in town on Sunday evenings. Some of the activities reported at the fourth quarterly conference in April, 1959, are as follows: collected food for four families at Thanksgiving, presented a Christmas play, went carolling at Christmas, made gifts for nursing home patients, sent money to Alaska following mission study, attended training school, conducted monthly vesper service, (youth choir) sang at least once a month, held prayer breakfast and Easter Sunrise service, held several parties during the year, and sold pen sets as a money-making project.

Mrs. Henry B. Smith was President of the Woman's Society of Christian Service from 1959-1961, followed by Mrs. George Marvin Smith, Jr. for the next two years. The ladies participated in the annual county-wide training school in the early spring and also conducted a

mission study. They always sent delegates to the annual meeting at Lake Junaluska in June and to the School of Missions at Pfeiffer College in August. Speakers were heard on the work of the Inter-Racial Council of Monroe. The membership remained fairly constant around 225. Mrs. Henry B. Smith later served as District President and then as a conference officer. Mrs. James H. Belk served as District Treasurer.

The Reverend Harley Williams served the church for five years (1960-1965). During these years progress toward the second phase of the building program was made, and the church experienced continued growth in membership and attendance and in the spirit of outreach. In June 1960, plans were made to buy a postage meter so that a copy of the bulletin could be sent to each member every week. In August, 1960, the recommendation was made to discontinue Sunday night services and concentrate on the youth program. The congregation accepted a Mission Special, underwriting one-half the salary of the Reverend and Mrs. Ray DeHainaut, missionaries to Argentina for several years. In turn other missionaries have been recipients of the Special Easter offering: the Reverend and Mrs. Kenneth Baucom (members of this church) in South Africa, and Miss Jenny Larsen of Norway, medical missionary to Ghanta in Africa.

In 1961, by action of the Western North Carolina Conference, Union County was taken from the Charlotte District and was grouped with Anson and Stanly counties to form the newly created Albemarle District. The Reverend Dr. W. Jackson Huneycutt was appointed as District Superintendent for the new district. Albemarle and Greensboro Districts were hosts to the 1961 WNC Annual Conference at Lake Junaluska. The combined choirs of Central Monroe and West Market Street (Greensboro) provided the music for "Big Sunday."

The October 3, 1960, Official Board meeting mentioned that "the segregation issue was discussed." Monroe made international headlines in 1961 when there was some racial tension. Robert F. Williams, a local Negro leader who was removed in 1959 from the presidency of the local NAACP chapter for advocating violence, led an effort to integrate the public swimming pool at Lake Lee. The pool was closed permanently. Williams published a paper, *The Crusader*, and implied that the local blacks were very much oppressed. However, the blacks had voted, Williams himself had run for mayor, and there were blacks serving on boards and on the police force. Monroe was trying to lure industry and was very conscious of its image; it had outstanding civic leaders who tried to smooth the waters. In August 1961, seven

Freedom Riders were on their way back north after being in Jackson, Mississippi. They stopped in Monroe to help Robert Williams improve the lot of the local blacks. In retrospect some think the main problem was Williams himself; he was a supporter of Fidel Castro, had visited Cuba, and flew the Cuban flag in his front yard. The Freedom Riders, Williams and some of his followers tried to integrate local businesses (including eating establishments) and visited various churches, including Central. They came to church late and were seated in the back (the only seats available) with little fanfare. There was unrest one August Sunday afternoon with picketing around the courthouse and some confrontations. A white couple inadvertently went down a strange street and found themselves detained by Williams and his followers. Williams left town before he could be arrested for kidnapping and was gone for a number of years (in Cuba, then Red China and East Africa, and finally ten years later to Michigan).

Further strides toward providing more adequate church educational facilities were made between 1960 and 1965. On December 3, 1961, a congregational meeting was called for the purpose of discussing future building — whether to remodel and enlarge the present educational building and the sanctuary on Hayne and Windsor Streets or to build a completely new structure at a new location. The congregation, after hearing the report of the study committee, voted to build a new structure on a new site. Those appointed to serve on the Building Committee were: Walter B. Love, Jr. (chairman), Jack Hernig (secretary), Mrs. J.C. Plyler, Edwin Niven, Sr., L.S. Presson, V.V. Secrest, Sr., Harold Shirley, and Kermit Starnes. The Building Finance Committee consisted of James Huntley (chairman), Robert Helms, Jr., Claude Eubanks, Frank Griffin, Irwin Price, John Nichols, and Edwin Niven, Jr.

A lot for the new church building was purchased in 1962. The site is a full block, about five and one-half acres, bordered by Sunset Drive (formerly Covington Street) and Hayne, Church, and Barden Streets. It included the old Covington place (known as Broadacre) from the A. M. Secrest estate, plus land belonging to Clyde Helms, Millard Huntley, and Ruth Garren. The cost of the property was \$46,500.00.

In October, 1962, the first building crusade for the second phase of the program was held. Pledges to be paid over a three-year period totalled \$151,000.

The Reverend Melton Harbin was appointed to serve Central Monroe in 1965 and served until 1968. During his three-year stay the

building program made great strides. On October 3, 1965, a congregational meeting was called. The preliminary plans for the new educational building, administrative area, kitchen, teen center and chapel were approved. The architect selected for the building was Harold Wagoner of Philadelphia, with Charles Connelly of Charlotte as associate. Dickerson Construction Company of Monroe was the contractor. During this same year the second building crusade was held. \$207,000.00 was subscribed to be paid over a period of three years. During those three years the new building was under construction and almost completed.

Mrs. Zeb Jones resigned as organist and choir director in 1961 after about twenty-five years in that position. In January, 1962, Albert R. May, of Charlotte was secured as choir director and served until 1965. Organists were Eva Dysart, Bill Hart, Joseph Lammers, Celeste Needy, and Doris Morgan. The latter served as both organist and choir director from 1965 to 1966. A full-time Director of Music was secured in 1966 with Miss Clarice Williams as the first to hold this position. After Miss Williams left the next year, Mrs. Morgan again served for a year. In 1968 Mary Patton Love began a successful tenure in that position for the next twelve years.

The Reverend Jacob Golden, who was appointed to Central in 1968, served the church during the last year that Central's congregation worshipped in the beloved old church on Hayne and Windsor Streets and the first exciting years in the new church on Hayne and Sunset. The third building crusade was conducted in the fall of 1968.

On Pentecost Sunday, May 25, 1969, the first service, the Laying of the Cornerstone and Service of Consecration of the church was held. It was truly a service of celebration and thanksgiving. The Reverend J. Elwood Carroll, District Superintendent, assisted the Reverend Golden in the service.

Some of the members remembered when the lovely old building was first occupied in 1902. Many remembered the difficult years of the 1920's and 1930's when the membership struggled to pay off the mortgage left from the 1921 construction of the parsonage and educational building. A lot of the members' families had belonged to Central for many years. So it was not surprising that there was a tremendous response to an auction sale held in early May, 1969. Many of the furnishings and architectural artifacts from the church were offered for sale. Furniture, books, light fixtures, floor tiles, pews, wainscoting, doors, and the organ pipes were just some of the items that found a new home, and often a new use, in local dwellings.

The vacated property, building and land, was sold to American Bank and Trust Company in 1969 for \$100,000.00. The church building was demolished in July 1969, and a paved parking lot was (and still is) located on the old church site.

The new facility was a delight to the members and quite handsome. The plant was designed to have something facing each of the four corners of the square lot. The two-story educational building faces the northeast corner with paved parking from that corner to the northwest corner. Many of the old trees were carefully preserved on the south side (Sunset Drive) of the lot. Facing the southeast corner is the lovely round chapel, which is used for small worship services, weddings, and funerals. There is now some parking in that area, near the playground. The fellowship hall, known as Central Hall, and its spacious patio face the northwest corner. It was used in lieu of a sanctuary for regular worship services and many other activities. It seats three hundred comfortably and the stage was arranged into a worship setting with organ, choir loft, pulpit, lectern, and altar table with brass cross and candlesticks against a dark green velvet hanging. It was used for regular worship for fourteen years, also for weddings. Some of our Methodist brides chose to use another denomination's sanctuary rather than the somewhat sterile ambiance of Central Hall. Phase three of the building program, the building of the sanctuary facing the southwest corner, was a number of years away. The congregation had to pay for the new facility and have about half of the projected cost of the sanctuary on hand before it could begin that additional construction.

The center part of the church plant has offices, choir room, kitchen, and youth center. There is a lovely parlor with a kitchenette on the second floor of the educational building.

Across Hayne Street and facing on Sunset Drive is the Scout Building. It was given in 1969 by Mr. and Mrs. James R. Huntley in honor of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. M. H. Huntley. It serves community functions such as a voting place, as well as a meeting place for Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts.

As the physical facilities of Central enlarged, the spirit of dedication and commitment and service for the members also increased under the leadership of the Reverend Jake Golden. A Day Care for pre-school children was established in January 1970, for the convenience of working parents in the community. A Mothers' Day Out program was begun in 1970, as was a Play School for 4- and 5-year olds. In the fall of 1972 a kindergarten for 5-year olds was established. These

programs used the children's section (downstairs) of the educational building.

Another milestone for The Methodist Church was reached in 1968. It united with the Evangelical United Brethren to become The United Methodist Church. Thus Central became Central United Methodist Church. It had begun one hundred twenty-five years before as a part of the Pleasant Grove circuit until 1857, then Monroe circuit, in 1865 as Monroe Station, then Monroe Methodist Episcopal Church, South. In 1897 when the third church building was in the planning stages, the name was changed to Central Methodist Episcopal Church, South. With the 1939 unification of the northern and southern branches to form The Methodist Church, our church became Central Methodist Church.

Many changes had come to Methodism since the 1784 Christmas Conference in Baltimore that made the Methodist Episcopal Church the first denomination founded in the new United States following the Revolutionary War. The first split came over the role of laymen in the governing bodies of the church and the power of the bishop to appoint travelling ministers. Lay representation was a cardinal principle in the 1830 formation of the Methodist Protestant Church. In 1844 the Methodist Episcopal Church split into the northern branch (The Methodist Episcopal Church) and the southern branch (The Methodist Episcopal Church, South). Lay representation moved faster in the latter, especially after the historic New Orleans Conference in 1866, the first General Conference of the Southern Church after the War Between the States. After the 1939 unification of the three branches of Methodism, the resulting Methodist Church had lay representation equal with clerical representation in the annual, jurisdictional, and general conferences, as well as most boards, commissions, and committees. Another democratic trend written into the 1939 Constitution required the bishop to consult with each pastor before making the pastoral appointments.

The 1939 merger left one festering sore untended. It created five regional jurisdictions and the Central Jurisdiction made up of black churches throughout the country. This divisive and embarrassing situation was finally corrected in the 1960's as the black conference boundaries were changed to coincide with the white conferences. The Central District (in western North Carolina) merged with the Western North Carolina Annual Conference in June of 1968 at Lake Junaluska. Since the Central District churches were concentrated in Guilford and Forsyth Counties, the Winston-Salem/Forsyth District was quite

large. A new district, called the Northeast District was formed, making a total of fourteen districts in the Western North Carolina Conference. Minority representation is stressed and, since the late 1960's, ministries to minorities (now including Spanish-speaking and Orientals) have proliferated.

Ecumenism has also made great strides in the Methodist denomination. The 1968 merger with the Evangelical United Brethren Church formed the new denomination, The United Methodist Church. Following several years of talks, merger was formalized in Dallas, Texas, from April 20 to May 4. Since there were no Evangelical United Brethren in the Western North Carolina Conference, no change was noted except the addition of the name "United" to each church name. Methodists are participants in the North Carolina, National, and World Council of Churches. *The North Carolina Christian Advocate*, official organ of both Methodist conferences in North Carolina, has been important in keeping its readers abreast of efforts at ecumenism and inclusiveness, as well as news of individual churches and their leaders.



May, 1969
Bulletin Board at Old Church



Chapter Twelve

A MODERN CHURCH FOR A MODERN MINISTRY

1971 to present

During the 1971 Western North Carolina Annual Conference, Central made a progressive step by requesting the appointment of an associate pastor to assist the Reverend Jake Golden in the ever-enlarging program of the church. (The only time previously that we had an associate was during World War II when the Reverend Joe Caldwell was associate with Mr. Armbrust.) Bishop Earl Hunt appointed the Reverend Randolph P. Waugh to fill this position, his first appointment since finishing seminary. The congregation welcomed Waugh and his recent bride, Brenda Souther Waugh of Asheville, to Monroe and Central Church.

The expanded church staff in 1971 included, in addition to the two ministers, the following:

Mrs. Doris Cornelius, Director of Church Activities and Treasurer

Miss Mary Patton Love, Director of Music

Mrs. Dottie Wreath, secretary

Mrs. Judy Stilwell, part-time secretary

Mrs. Ethel Carr, director of Day Care

Bonetta Covington, cook for Day Care

Mrs. Martha Rollins and Mrs. Vicki Murray, kindergarten directors

Mrs. Nancy Ratliff, Mrs. Bette Sue Davis, and Mrs. Hazel Nichols, Play School staff.

For ten weeks during the summer of 1970 the Reverend Jake Golden and the Reverend Allen Fisher of England exchanged pulpits. The Golden family consisted of Jake, his wife Jane, and three children: Chip, Jon, and Anne. (It is interesting to note that both of the Golden boys are now ministers in the Western North Carolina Conference.) They went to the Fishers' home in North Dudley, England. The Reverend Allen Fisher brought his wife Mary and their two pre-teen daughters, Christine and Joanne. It was an interesting experience for both ministers, their families, and the two congregations. The Fishers

endeared themselves to all with whom they associated. About ten years later they returned for a two-week visit with Jane and Vann Secrest, Jr., who live next door to the parsonage.

In the early 1970's the organizational set-up of the local church changed, initiated by the 1968 uniting of The Methodist Church with the Evangelical United Brethren. The new name of the denomination was The United Methodist Church. (These two denominations shared a common historical and spiritual heritage — uniting had been discussed as early as 1803! The EUB Church appealed to the German-speaking immigrants, while the Methodist Church was the choice of English-speaking residents.) The Council on Ministries concept was used successfully in the EUB Church and was gradually phased into The United Methodist Church. The 1968 Discipline describes the Council and its relationship to the Administrative Board. The conference set-up changed from a Program Council to a Council on Ministries in 1972 and this change was echoed in the local churches.

The local COM, meeting monthly, is the planning body which reports to the Administrative Board at its quarterly meetings. The Administrative Board may revise, reject, or approve plans from the COM. The COM then implements the plans adopted. Work Area Commissions are: Evangelism, Worship, Missions, Stewardship, Social Concerns, Education, and Ecumenical Affairs. Age level coordinators plan and carry out a comprehensive ministry for children, youth, adult and family. Special committees are to include: Pastor-Parish Relations, Nominations, Finance; others could be appointed, as well as task groups formed by COM for definite, possibly short term, goals. The Charge Conference appoints members and leaders of the groups listed above. The Woman's Society of Christian Service and Wesleyan Service Guild set-up was maintained.

In October, 1971, the fourth Building Crusade was held with pledges amounting to \$207,444.00 to be paid over a three-year period.

The Albemarle and Charlotte Districts served as hosts to the 1972 WNC annual conference with the choirs and ministers of Central Monroe and First Church Charlotte leading the "Big Sunday" service. It was at this conference that the Reverend Jake Golden was appointed to First Church Charlotte and the Reverend Calvin Leonard was appointed to Central. The Reverend Randolph Waugh was returned to Central as associate pastor.

During the Reverend Calvin Leonard's service to Central 1972-1975, the church was busy with the finances related to paying for the church facility and planning for a new sanctuary. An \$80,000 balloon note

was paid off and three-year pledges were again secured for the building fund (this fifth building crusade was held in October, 1974). The regular church budget for 1973-1974 was \$121,322. Jake Plyler was chairman of the finance committee composed of Harold Shirley, Claude Eubanks, V.V. Secrest, Sr., Lewis Allen, Frank Griffin, James R. Huntley, and Marvin Canupp. In addition to the pledges for the church budget and the building fund, the members made an Easter offering of \$3000; the Mission Chairman for Central for a number of years was Charlie Hunley. The total spent for missions in 1973 was \$3804. Part of this amount, \$3101, went to pay half the support of a medical missionary, Miss Jenny Larsen, in Ghanta, Africa (Central shared in her support also in 1972 and in 1974). Larsen, a native of Norway, made a special visit to the church on July 28, 1974. The other missions money was: \$51 for Nicauraguan relief, \$452 for Bolivia, and \$200 for UMCOR.

Mary Patton Love became organist and choir director in 1968 and served until 1980. In addition to the chancel choir, she organized and directed several children and youth choirs and two bell choirs. She spearheaded the purchase of a two-octave set of bells and accompanying equipment. Mary Patton presented the children and youth in several cantatas during her service at Central: "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat", "100% Chance of Rain", etc. She took the youth choir on an annual singing tour.

In 1973 the church library had grown to more than 800 volumes. Mrs. Myra Helms and Miss Ruth Hinson of Wingate undertook the task of cataloguing the books. They were assisted by Mrs. I. B. (Dot) Shive and Mrs. T. M. (Clota) Wilson. The library has continued to grow as memorials are given to this collection.

The first chairman of the Council on Ministries for 1973 was I.B. Shive. He served in this capacity for three years, followed by Robert J. Smith for the years 1976-1978.

The presidents of the Woman's Society of Christian Service during the 1970's were Mrs. George Marvin Smith, Jr. (who became Mrs. Gene Kendrick in 1973), Mrs. Lewis Allen, Mrs. Tom Batchelor, and Mrs. Oscar Brock. With the 1968 merger with the Central Jurisdiction, "Woman's" in the title was changed to "Women's"; the work of the Society and the Wesleyan Service Guild remained the same. The General Conference of 1972 was structured to merge the Women's Society of Christian Service and Wesleyan Service Guild into a new organization called United Methodist Women. This became official at the June 1973, conference. Local units were given more freedom to

choose their own avenues of service with fewer guidelines and assignments from the conference level and beyond. The Western North Carolina United Methodist Women has about 50,000 members; it is probably the largest and most influential women's organization in the state.

Central purchased a home at 214 Elizabeth Avenue to serve as the parsonage for the associate minister in 1973. Approval for the purchase was unanimous at a June 3 congregational meeting; the price was \$20,800. The Reverend Randolph and Brenda Waugh moved from the Madrid Apartment that had been rented for them by the church. A happy occasion for the church family was the birth of a son to this young couple on April 10, 1974. Brian Christopher Waugh was baptized by his grandfather, the Reverend Paschal Waugh, at the morning service at Central on September 15, 1974.

Under the inspiration and direction of Mrs. James (Helen) Huntley a series of workshops was held in the fall of 1973 to make Chrismons to decorate the annual Christmas tree placed in Central Hall. These are still used each year on the tree in the narthex of the sanctuary.

The membership at Central increased from 1286 to 1315 during 1973.

In August of 1974 five young people from Methodist churches in Norway, Sweden, and Finland, members of a Youth Caravan, spent a week in Monroe. They were guests in the homes of our young people and shared in special activities, both educational and recreational, and in a planning session at Brevard College. This group was sponsored as part of the Conference Missions.

During Mr. Leonard's pastorate a special emphasis was given to improving the Sunday school attendance. In September of 1974 a new class was organized for young adults, college age and up. Dr. Tom Batchelor was instrumental in this endeavor. This class became known as the Parlor Class.

In November, 1974, the sixth building crusade was conducted, with pledges sought also for the regular budget. The theme was "Give and Live." On November 17 a victory banquet was held with a visiting layman, Bill Henderson of High Point, as speaker. The amount pledged for the budget was \$87,875.80; pledges on the building fund totalled \$150,554.44 for a three-year period.

On November 6, 1974, the entire church and city was stunned and saddened by the untimely death of Gregory Leonard, son of the Reverend and Mrs. Leonard. Gregory died of gunshot wounds inflicted by a stranger while in an auto store in Charlotte. He had just

recently returned from military service in Germany.

Annual conference 1975 brought change in the church leadership. Mr. Leonard was transferred to First Church Hickory and the Reverend William Brantley was sent to Central, arriving on June 17. The Reverend Randolph Waugh was re-appointed to continue his service as associate at Central.

During the church year 1975 a visitation committee was formed to visit the many shut-ins of Central. Mrs. Ralph Parks (Nell), as chairperson of the Work Area on Evangelism, chaired the committee composed of Mrs. Neal Clark, Mrs. Emmett Griffin, Mrs. Jack Hargett, Mrs. Henry B. Smith, Mrs. W.H. Rooker, and Mrs. Bruce Snyder.

At the 1976 annual conference the Reverend William Brantley was reappointed to Central and would serve a total of four years. The Reverend Randolph Waugh was transferred to Christ Church, Greensboro, as associate, having served Central for five years as associate pastor. The Reverend Britt Hadley was assigned as Central's associate, having served four years at nearby Wingate United Methodist Church.

Mrs. David Miles joined the church staff in the summer of 1976 working part-time with young adults. In 1978 Joan became the professional educator on the staff, holding this position until the birth of her third little daughter.

At the 1976 Southeast Jurisdictional Conference Bishop Earl G. Hunt, having served The Western North Carolina Conference for the maximum term of twelve years, was re-assigned. Bishop Scott Allen was assigned to the Western North Carolina Conference, having served for eight years in the Knoxville area.

For the first time in Central's history two Sunday morning worship services were held during the summer months of 1976. There was the regular eleven o'clock service and a nine o'clock service in the chapel. The schedule continued each summer through 1982. Holy Communion was celebrated in the chapel the first Sunday of each month at 9 A.M. during the year except on special Sundays when communion was scheduled for the 11 A.M. service in Central Hall.

The 1976 bicentennial year of Methodism in the United States was the occasion of a series of training sessions on basic beliefs, the history of The Methodist Church, and church structure. These proved most informative for church leaders and the general membership. Another first for 1976 was a series of family night suppers that were continued on Wednesday nights to the present (September through May). These first suppers were organized through the circles by Mary Laney; she

had to "fill in" and do much of the work herself. Everyone realized a better way was needed; when Central hired a cook, the suppers became one of the cook's duties. A new order of service was initiated, and girls served as acolytes for the first time (this is usually done by sixth graders). A "Human Sexuality Lab" was conducted for 7th and 8th graders and their parents.

During the 1977 Annual conference Doris Cornelius was consecrated a Diaconal Minister in the United Methodist Church. Doris completed a four-year program of Christian Education courses at Scarritt College in Nashville, Tennessee, to qualify her for this office as a certified Christian Educator. Doris was well prepared for this position, having served Central as secretary, treasurer, youth worker, education director, and coordinator of church activities at various times during 28 years.

Out of a Committee on Lay Workers authorized by the 1968 General Conference (for each conference) grew the Board of Diaconal Ministry. The title "Diaconal Minister" is used in reference to a consecrated (and well trained) lay worker in such fields as Education, Music and Evangelism. Such workers can become members of the Annual Conference when elected. In the early 1980's there was a total of 106 such lay professional persons in the Western North Carolina Conference. The Board was formed in 1977 with Dr. Mary E. Bethea as its first chairperson and Doris Cornelius was the second, serving from 1981-1985.

In January, 1978, Central suffered a great loss with Doris' resignation. Never has a church had a more dedicated staff member, one who had more influence on so many young people and was so loved by the congregation. In appreciation of her service, Sunday, February 26 was designated as "Doris Cornelius Day." A generous check was presented to her toward the purchase of an automobile. She subsequently served a church in Charlotte until her retirement in 1992.

The years of the 1970's found the members of Central involved in wide areas of service. 1. Workshops and lunch for the blind were held.

2. A special Sunday school class for the mentally handicapped was formed, called the Friendship Class.

3. Residents of the Methodist Home, Charlotte, made annual visits to morning worship and were served dinner.

4. A spring art exhibit was prepared by the children of the church.

5. Community-wide Family Life conferences were held. Dr. Mary Burke, professor at UNCC, was the leader at several of these.

6. Program planning sessions were held at Lake Junaluska by the church youth.

7. Trips to the beach were enjoyed by various ages of youth groups.

8. Annual youth choir tours were directed by Mary Patton Love, Music Director.

9. The Parlor Sunday school class adopted a continuing project in 1977 to develop a scholarship fund to aid college students in the Christian Education field in memory of Sally Shirley Bivens. The principal method of financing the fund is serving a dinner following the choir's Christmas music each year.

10. In 1978 another new Sunday school class was formed for single adults.

11. A decision was made to purchase a van for youth and adult activities.

12. A new circle was formed in March, 1977; it became known as the Faith, Hope, and Charity circle.

During the latter part of May, 1977, there were activities celebrating the Church Dedication, meaning that the facility was debt-free. Faire Funderburk wrote and directed a play, "The Church is Born" based on the early days of Central Church. The outdoor drama was performed on the site of the 1902 church at the corner of Hayne and Windsor Streets (in the parking lot) and was complete with circuit rider and horse. On Saturday night, May 25, a dinner was held with special guests from the community and former pastors and spouses. The special Sunday morning Dedication Service featured Bishop Scott Allen. This liquidation of all indebtedness paved the way to start planning for construction of a sanctuary; the Building Committee recommended this step and the Administrative Board unanimously approved.

The next pastoral change was in 1979 as the Reverend William Brantley departed and the Reverend Thad McDonald arrived for a three-year tenure. His gentle manner endeared him to his "flock". The records show Frank Griffin as chairman of the Administrative Board, Bob Smith for COM and Margaret Batchelor (Mrs. Tom) as president of UMW.

The 1980 report of Pastor Thad McDonald had the four themes of struggle, sadness, joy, and encouragement. Financial struggle resulted in cut-backs in all areas; the preacher shared in the sacrifice. Twenty-four members died and a large number had serious illness — thus the sadness. The joy and encouragement came from worship experiences and serious involvement by laymen in church decisions and commit-

ment. The Methodist Men were reactivated and a new circle was formed. The UMW shared \$1000 in new furnishings for the parsonage on Elizabeth Avenue.

The Reverend Thad McDonald's 1981 report on the state of the church was more hopeful. The annual fall stewardship campaign for the 1982 budget was conducted by Dr. and Mrs. Orville Wilson of the Field and Finance Department of the Board of Global Ministries. The Sanctuary Building Committee was re-activated to plan for the new facility — groundbreaking was to be the next year. The Reverend Thad McDonald celebrated the coming of associate the Reverend Bill Robinson in June of 1981; he also praised the work of Joan Miles, who had resigned the end of the year.

In 1981 Julian Bell headed a committee for a four-month study to correct and update the church roll for the first time since the mid-1960's. A total of 218 names were dropped by action of the charge conference, with 107 members deferred for later action in the category of "Last Known Address". The total of full members numbered 1210. That full report is the only record we have from the December 8, 1981, charge conference. The membership was 1060 at the November 2, 1982, charge conference; a year later the figure was 1121.

In the summer of 1981 Dr. and Mrs. Allen Fisher of Southport, England, visited for five weeks. They had been in the pulpit exchange program in the summer of 1970 with our own Reverend Jake Golden and family. Another visitor was Miss Lorena Kelly, former missionary to Lodja, Zaire, who had received support from Central. The Reverend Bill Robinson arrived in June as our new associate pastor.

The Reverend Floyd Berrier was assigned to Central at the 1982 annual conference; he was to remain for two years. The church sanctuary plans were being finalized in 1982. The building committee had worked with an architect in 1977-78 on a plan that included a balcony. This plan was approved by the congregation and bids were solicited. The figure of \$750,000 was considered the maximum amount feasible; when the bids came in at well over a million dollars, the plans were scrapped and the building committee was discharged. The thinking was that a wait of several years would allow for the accumulation of more money in the building fund and perhaps the climate for construction would be more favorable, with lower interest rates.

New plans were presented to the congregation at a Church Conference held on August 1, 1982. When the plans were approved, the

building committee proceeded so that groundbreaking was held on October 3, 1982. Afterward "Supper on the Ground" for four hundred people was organized by Ruby Scott.

In 1982 the UMW president was Mrs. Howard Mullis (Johnnie), and Dr. Tom Batchelor was the chairman of the Administrative Board. The Council on Ministries Chairman Larry Smith, with the new pastor, Reverend Floyd Berrier, as advisor, planned several programs to benefit various groups in the church. A van was purchased for transporting church members. Membership training classes were started for prospective members. Various summer activities were used to maintain the interest of the youth. The new Sunday school curriculum, 'Intro 80's' was presented in a teachers' workshop in August. Joan Miles taught a Human Sexuality Workshop in November for grades 7, 8, and 9. Joan became Council on Ministries chairman in January of 1983; she resigned in June when she accepted employment at First Presbyterian Church. Again during Lent, 1983, Central joined with other downtown churches in rotating mid-week services with lunch being served by the host church. The Reverend Jacob Golden, former pastor, preached at a late-March revival. Robert McCain took over as chairman of the Council on Ministries in the summer of 1983. A change in staff brought Joe Hamby as lay pastoral assistant, with responsibilities in the youth program and Christian Education. A new class for young couples was organized and the older adults were organized into a Sixty-Plus group. Doris Morgan became chancel choir director, with Dr. Martha Secrest Asti as the organist.

The most exciting event for 1983 was moving into the new sanctuary in September. The rose window and some other details were not quite finished, but the congregation hardly noticed.

On Sunday, February 26, 1984, the new organ was dedicated with a special service, a recital by Dr. Martha Secrest Asti, followed by a reception. "The organ, built by the Casavant Frere Organ Company of Quebec, Canada, is a three-manual, 38-rank instrument with 28 stops. There are 2,086 pipes. One of the divisions, the recit, is enclosed in an expression chamber. Manual natural keys are made of ebony; many sharps are made of rosewood with ivory caps. Pedal sharps are made of rosewood." (Description taken from the dedication brochure.) The organ was a gift in memory of Sally Shirley Bivens (1949-1977) by her parents, Harold and Gladys Shirley.

The 1984 list of church officials, in addition to the new Senior Minister the Reverend Don Haynes (new in August) and Assistant Joe Hamby, listed Robert Hord as chairman of the Administrative Board;

Robert McCain, Jr., as chairman of the Council on Ministries; and Louise Law as WSCS President. These same people are listed in December, 1985. Martha Asti was organist, Doris Morgan directed the chancel choir, and Sylvia Pinson directed the other choirs. A part-time Director of Education was being sought in early 1984, with Marilyn Blythe Wooten being hired. Two retired preachers were members of the congregation, the Reverend Lee Spencer (who had served Central from 1956-1960) and the Reverend Paul Quirk.

The December 1, 1985, Pastor's Report to the Charge Conference by the Reverend Donald Haynes was detailed and upbeat. The membership was just shy of 1200 and he commented on the increased new members from outside the denomination and living outside the city limits. "While we still celebrate our 'downtown Monroe' heritage and image, we are considerably less provincial than just a few years ago." There were staff changes during the year 1985. Dottie Wreath left as Financial Secretary, after seventeen years on the staff. This position was renamed as Business Manager and Pamela Sanders was hired to fill it. Marilyn Wooten resigned in August to return to a Charlotte church. She had served a year doing "double duty" as Director of the Playschool and Director of Christian Education. The latter position was filled in January, 1986, by Teka Hyatt. Darby Scott was hired as Playschool director. Sonja Clough was the director of Day Care. A new committee, Through the Week Ministries, was appointed in March with Maxine Wally as chairman. It was charged with coordination of Day Care, Playschool, Mother's Morning Out, and Afterschool (formed in August to fill a gap in child care services). This committee voted to recommend to the Administrative Board that the church phase in the ownership and operation of all through-the-week child care programs with no subsidy or inter-regulatory relationship with government agencies (the end of Department of Social Services subsidies). This was approved early in 1986 by the Administrative Board; it was understood that enrollment be encouraged regardless of racial identity. Many felt that the next new staff member needed was a church cook.

After almost two years, the assistant pastor, Joe Hamby, resigned in April, 1985, to go into the field of social services. At annual conference Bishop Jones appointed as associate pastor the Reverend Wayne Allen, who with his wife and two children moved here in June. The Elizabeth Avenue parsonage was inadequate and serious discussions began on how to improve the housing situation for the Allens and future associate pastors. The parsonage on Elizabeth Avenue was sold

in 1986 and the associate minister began to receive a housing allowance; this enabled the Allens to purchase a home in Monroe. Wayne and Anna Allen surely endeared themselves to the whole congregation during their six-year tenure at Central. Wayne not only worked with the youth but was faithful and systematic in visiting the home-bound members. He initiated some Older Adult programs and trips. What began as day trips in the vans evolved into organized tours of several days' duration using a tour service.

In September, 1985, the 13% bank note on the building fund was paid down to \$140,000 and renewed at 9.5% adjustable rate. Also in September the Music and Fine Arts Council was formed with Mrs. John Nichols (Hazel) as its first chairman. It has brought some fine artists to our church to perform, with the community invited.

A new pictorial directory was done in 1986. This required much organization and Beth Love did it beautifully.

Teka Hyatt was hired in January, 1986, as Director of Christian Education. She also directed children's choirs and eventually became Day Care Director. She was on leave of absence the latter part of 1991 with pregnancy complications and decided to resign.

Jim Rabon was instrumental in getting the congregation familiar with Methodist Mission Building teams. For six consecutive years he went with a team to some foreign land, the first being San Jose, Costa Rica, in 1986. In early 1987 four members went to Colon, Panama to build a school addition there; in addition to Rabon, Howard Dehner, Jim Chastain, and Curtis Blackwood made up the group from Central on several building teams. In 1988 the destination was Espaza, Costa Rica. Early in 1989 the Reverend Wayne Allen led a group from the Western North Carolina Conference to a Methodist Training Institute in Meru, Kenya, to observe the missions work of Lewis and Dottie Gibbs. Of the fifteen who went, five were a medical mission team who worked nearby, while the other ten formed a building team; the group included five from Central Church. The four men — Rabon, Dehner, Chastain, and Blackwood — went to Puerto Rico in 1990 and to St. Croix in 1991. Increased giving for missions was another result of this educational effort.

The year 1987 marked the first debt-free year for Central since its 1957 beginning of the building program. Several new programs were started in 1987: a Parents' Support group, a young adult group, and a Singles' Group, as well as expansion of the Older Adult program and mission involvement. The regular budget for the 1987 year topped \$300,000. Pam Sanders resigned as business manager and Pat Morris

was hired in February of 1987.

Late in 1987 Jo Bell resigned as Administrative Assistant, effective in January of 1988. She has remained as a very dedicated volunteer (as has her husband, Julian) in many phases of the church's work, including membership. For the year 1987 the Chairman of the Administrative Board was Phil Wally, the Council on Ministries Chairman was Bill Fleming, and Mrs. Tom Laney (Mary) was President of United Methodist Women.

To celebrate the church's debt-free status a formal dedication of the sanctuary was held on the first weekend of December, 1987. A Saturday night banquet was held on December 5 with former pastors and staff as special guests. Their remembrances were both touching and humorous. The finale for the weekend was the Sunday morning service with Bishop L. Bevel Jones III giving the Dedication Sermon. Frank Griffin, as chairman of the trustees, presented the building for the bishop to dedicate.

After the church debt was finally paid at the end of September 1987, the members realized that wear and tear on the building had taken its toll and a Restoration Fund was established, with a loan in excess of \$300,000 from the bank. Painting and repairing the buildings and updating of heating/air conditioning were attended to. More of the parking lot was paved. Improvements were made to the sanctuary sound system, and facilities were installed for video taping of the services. Some landscaping was done, and the choir loft was expanded to be able to accomodate instruments. Two projects in the future are a memorial parlor and a family life center for recreational ministries, including a gymnasium.

The congregation was divided into Neighborhood Groups; these would prove to be useful in a number of ventures, such as small gatherings for the pastors to meet with. Martine Smith succeeded Pat Morris as business manager in April 1988. A new member of the staff, Leigh Kimbrough, was hired in August to work with the young people and the music program; she directed all the choirs except the chancel choir. Leigh also shared her beautiful soprano voice for many church functions, as well as community cultural events.

The Reverend Don Haynes came to Monroe in August of 1984, when the Reverend Floyd Berrier was moved to the bishop's staff. The bishop decided Haynes was needed on his staff and he left Central in August of 1988. The Reverend Joe Reeves moved to Central from First Church in Shelby; he had served five years there and was much loved. He soon endeared himself to our church. His sermons and his

writings were outstanding.

In 1989 Phil Wally was chairman of the Administrative Board, Louise Griffin was president of United Methodist Women, and Council on Ministries Chairman was Bob Smith. Family night suppers on Wednesday nights were well established; sometimes there was a program, always good food and fellowship. The youth choir went to Atlanta in June; they sang for several groups but also participated in a work project with disadvantaged children. In September 1989, the 90-plus members were recognized by the Church History Committee at a Sunday morning service. Blanche Benton, our oldest active member (then age 93), was named Historian Emeritus and presented a framed certificate.

The Methodist Hymnal is revised about every generation, and 1990 was the year a new one was published. Central United Methodist Church was one of the first in the WNC conference to place an order. Enough for the sanctuary and the chapel were ordered, many of them given as memorials.

By 1990 the church budget had grown to \$445,781. The number of Memorial Funds had grown to seven: Music, Handbell, Columbarium, Landscape, Gate, Hymnal, and New Van. Some memorials were also received into the regular budget or to the Restoration Fund. Ken Haigler was the new chairman of the Administrative Board, Bob Smith for COM, and Louise Griffin for UMW.

In July, 1990, Debbie Deese was hired as Secretary, replacing Missy Thomas. Also Walt and Beth Love, Evangelism committee, prepared a brochure on Central Church for visitors and for new members. A participation study was conducted, headed by Faire Funderburk, to see what interests members had and to get more volunteer help in various phases of church life; forty-eight choices were included in the survey. A task force was formed to study the feasibility of Day Care for the Elderly; the idea was judged premature in view of the stringent requirements of such a venture. A new van was purchased in 1991 to supplement the frequent use of the old one.

In the spring of 1991 it became apparent that the Reverend Wayne Allen would be moved to another church at conference in June. He had endeared himself to young and old in his six years as associate pastor at Central, but most realized that he needed to move on in order to "move up." He and his family moved to New London on June 25. His successor was our first female associate pastor, the Reverend Leslee Lyndon, who had just finished her studies at Emory University.

After a number of years of study and discussion, in April, 1991, the

committee for a Columbarium and garden was re-activated under the chairmanship of Doris Morgan. A welcome gift from the estate of Faye Noles Wells was earmarked for this purpose. Plans were made for a wall to be constructed between the chapel and the sanctuary with seventy niches for ashes. The plan was approved to pre-sell the niches for \$500 each and thus the cost would not be borne by the church. A brochure and Rules and Regulations were presented by Mrs. Morgan to the Administrative Board on July 21, 1991; they were approved. The curved wall was constructed in 1993 and put to use immediately.

For 1992 Ken Haigler was still Administrative Board chairman; Britt Hadley was the new chairman of COM, and the new UMW president was Nancy Gustafson. A complete list of the church officers is available for any time period, usually printed in early January when new members fill the offices. Many of the offices require a lot of time and dedication, but we name these three, as they are the source of many of the church records.

The year 1992 saw several staff changes. The Reverend Joe Reeves retired and bought a home near Monroe. At annual conference in June the Reverend Robert E. Boggan, Jr. was sent to Central as senior minister. Early in 1992 Teka Hyatt resigned as Day Care Director. Robin Batchelor was named to replace her in April, 1992. After nine years as chancel choir director, Doris Morgan resigned in May. Her interim replacement, Carolyn Thompson, finished out the year 1992. Leigh Kimbrough resigned her position in December, 1992, to move to Houston, Texas.

A highlight of 1992 was a Spiritual Renewal week end September 18-20, led by the Reverend Tom Frank and the Reverend Richard Ward. Their fresh approach to worship and the work of the local church was well received and will be long remembered.

Planning was begun in 1992 for the sesquicentennial celebration — Central Church will be 150 years old in May of 1994. Memorial plates of the old (1902) church were ordered; later matching plates would be available with a sketch of the present church. The bishop was asked to put May 8, 1994, on his calendar.

The year 1993 was also a year of changes in officers and staff. John Hendley was the new chairman of the Administrative Board. Marianne Belk succeeded Nancy Gustafson as UMW president. This women's group sponsored a Valentine luncheon and invited all the women of the church. They also had a breakfast on October 2; the speaker was the Western North Carolina Conference UMW President, Mildred Gibson. Just elected in September, Mrs. Gibson is from Stanly

County, the first conference president to be from the Albemarle District. The women are very involved with missions; one local project is furnishing a home for Turning Point, the local shelter for battered women. They also are compiling a cookbook to celebrate the church's sesquicentennial.

In the spring of 1993 Martine Smith resigned after five years as business manager. Her replacement was Chris Shield, followed by Dana Spence in October. A new church directory is being prepared for distribution in our sesquicentennial year of 1994.

Early in 1993 two full-time staff members were hired, resulting in an explosion of new opportunities for educational, cultural, and spiritual growth. Mike K  ller began in January as Minister of Music. His responsibilities include directing all the choirs, and he has found time to form two drama groups. Moving here from Louisiana, he was familiar with this area from his student days at Pfeiffer College. One of his strengths is bell choirs, with several compositions to his credit.

Marilyn Wooten came in February as Director of Christian Education. Her knowledge, creativity, and enthusiasm have put new life into the Sunday School program and opportunities for children and youth. During the years since she was last at Central in 1985, Marilyn held a similar position at a Charlotte church. Both preachers were re-assigned to Central at the 1993 annual conference.

A unique opportunity at Central the first weekend in December of 1993 was the Spiritual Life Weekend. Dr. Evelyn Laycock, of Lake Junaluska (conference lay leader), was our speaker for a series of services and Bible study opportunities on December 5-7. Her sincerity and down-to-earth approach both inspired and endeared her to her hearers at Central.

A big 1994 mission project here in Monroe is planned for Central Church. It will undertake to finance and build a Habitat for Humanity house. The project is to be in memory of Anna Kennedy, who died in a tragic auto accident in August 1993, soon after her graduation from high school. She led her classmates in building a Habitat house in Charlotte as their senior class project.

Central United Methodist Church continues to look forward, as well as backward, to a long and proud history. Someone has said that history should be like a rear view mirror — we should use it to see where we have been, but always anticipate where we are going.



*First Wedding in Chapel
(Lee-Plyler)
1969*



Chapel — (Interior)



*Children's Week Day School, 1970's
Martha Rollins and Pat Truitt, Teachers*



*Weaver Wesley Sunday School Class, 1970's
Teacher, Walt Love*



Central Hall decorated for Wedding Ceremony, 1981



Worship Service in Central Hall



*Youth Choir
1970's*



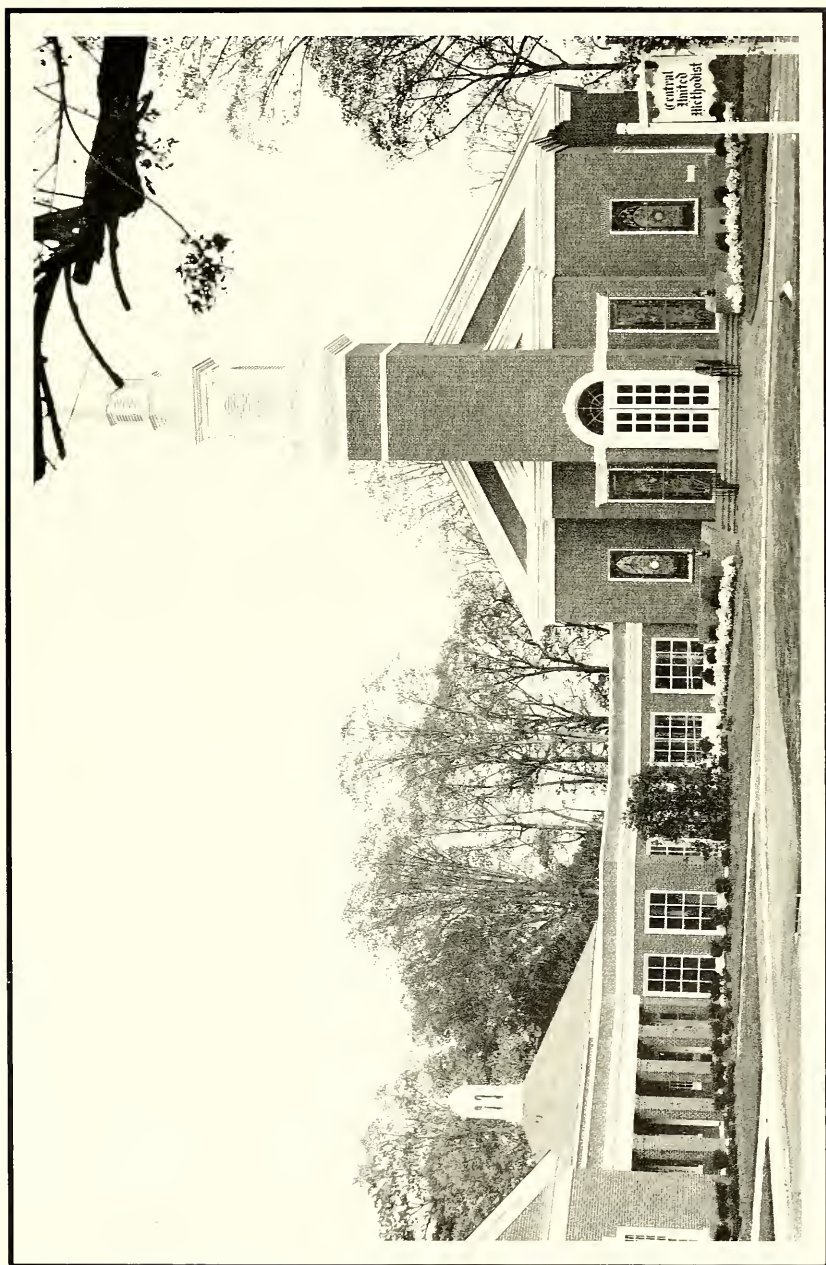
*Planning Group for Building Campaign
Minister Jake Golden, 1970's*



Ground breaking for new Sanctuary, 1981, Bob Smith, Chairman Sanctuary Building Committee, Rev. Floyd Berrier, Minister



New Sanctuary, 1983, Bob Smith, Chairman Sanctuary Building Committee, Rev. Floyd Berrier, Minister



Central United Methodist Church



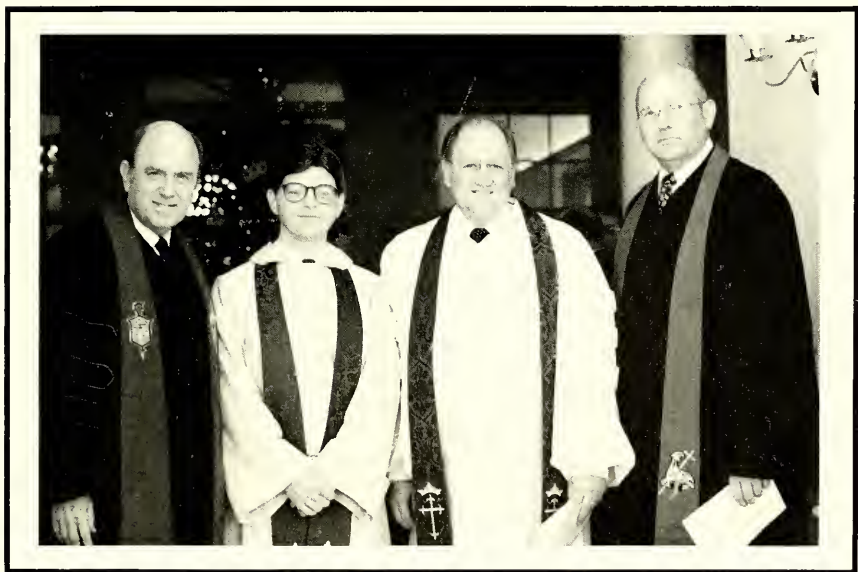
Shute Plyler Sunday School Class, 1990



Children prepare for Easter



First wedding in New Sanctuary — Trull-Rollins, 1983

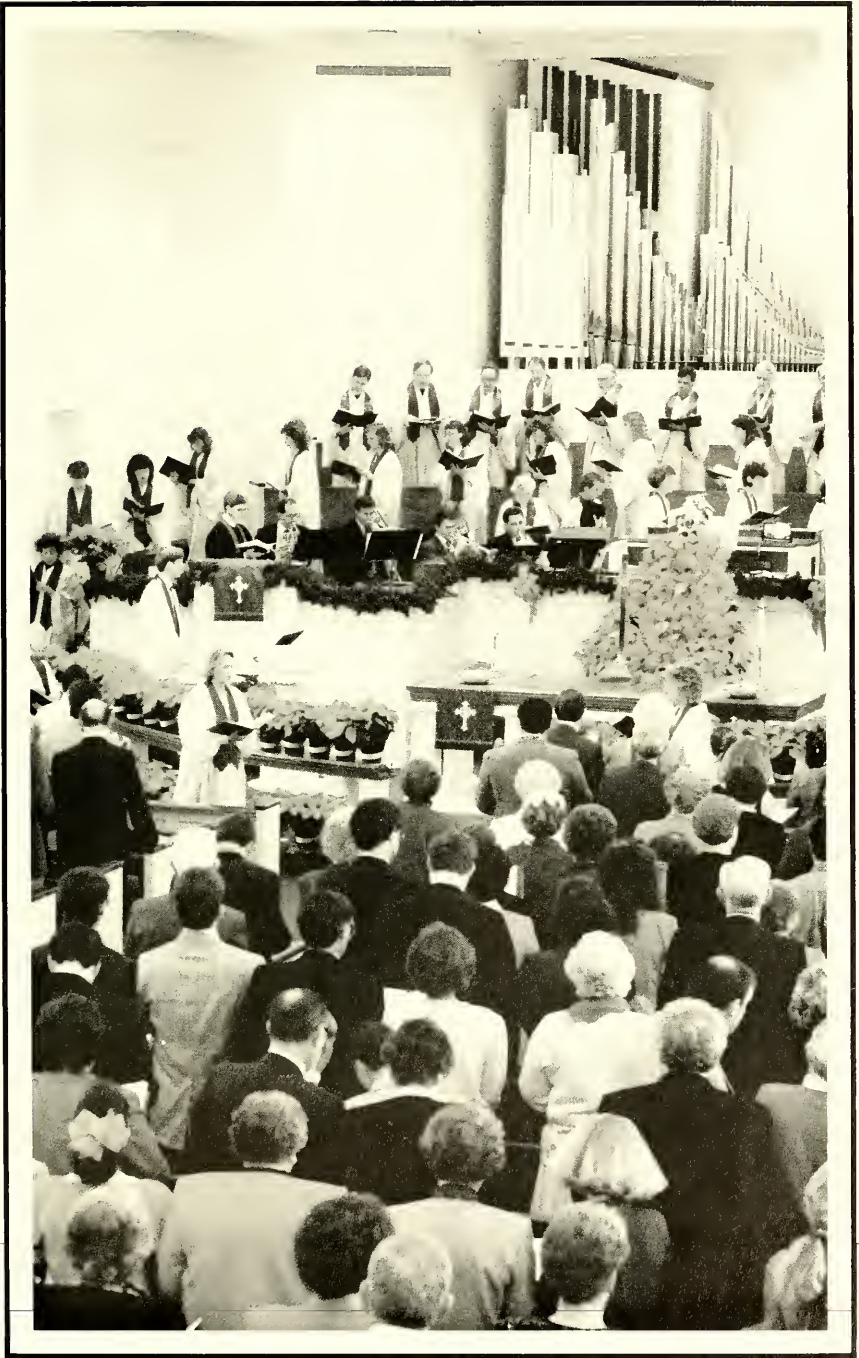


Dedication Service of New Sanctuary, 1987

Bishop L. Bevel Jones, III, Rev. Wayne Allen, Assoc. Min., Rev. Don Haynes, Sr. Min., Rev. Lloyd G. Hunsucker, Dist. Supt.



Dedication Service, Dec. 6, 1987



Adult Choir Recessional Christmas Music Service, Doris Morgan, Director, 1990



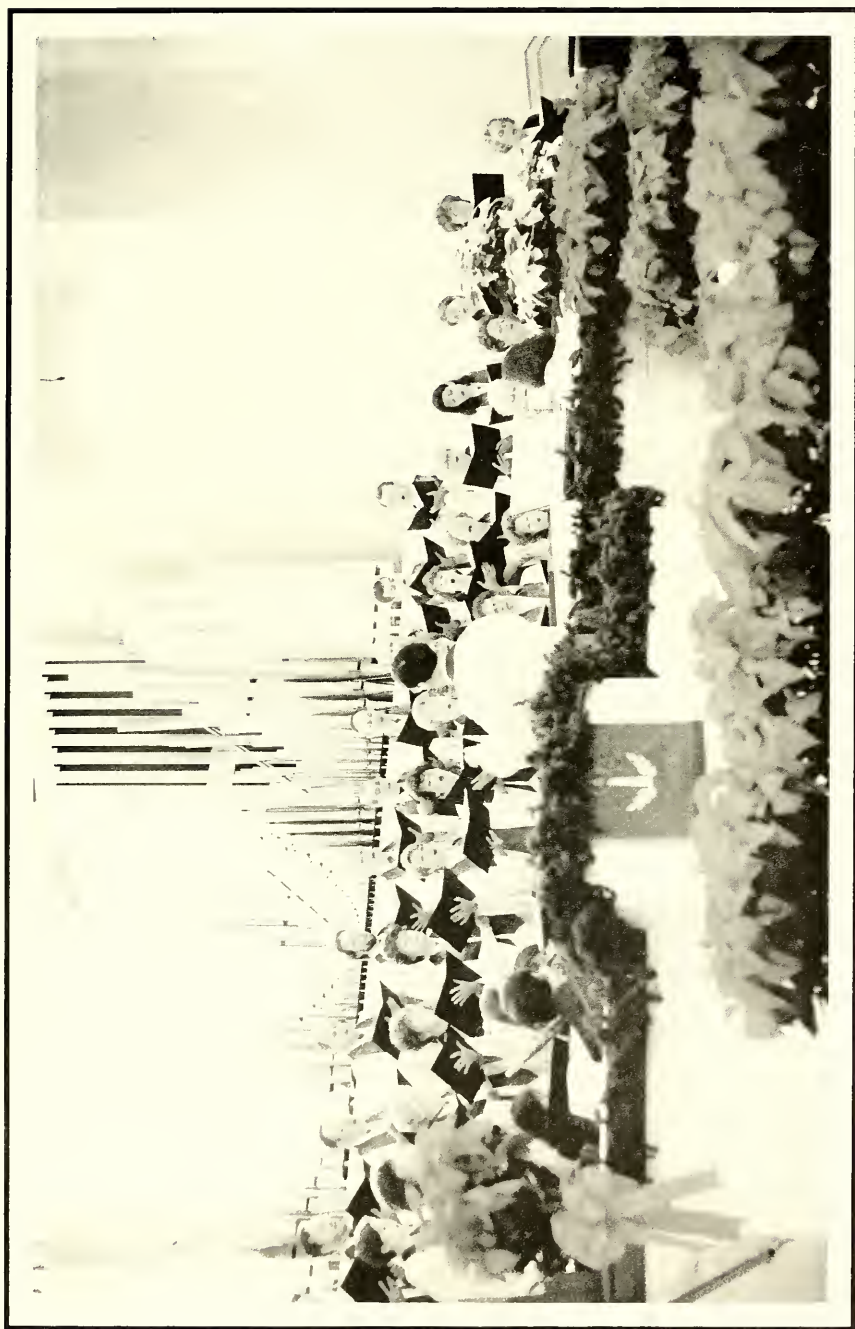
Mike Keller: Director of Music and Fine Arts; Rev. Leslee Lyndon: Associate Minister; Marilyn Wooten, Director of Christian Education; Rev. Robert Boggan, Senior Minister, 1994



*Dr. Martha Asti
Church Organist
1994*



Debbie Deese, Administrative Assistant; Edwina Hiatt, Weekday Business and Kitchen Manager; Dana Spence, Business Manager; Larry Shell, Maintenance, Supervisor, 1994



Chancel Choir Christmas, 1993



Youth Program, 1993



Christmas Congregation, 1993



Administrative Board, 1994: John Hendley, Chairman



A Young Adult Sunday School Class, 1994



Columbarium and Garden Gates



Week-Day Ministries, 1994



Children Sunday School Group, 1994



United Meth. Women prepare cookbooks for Sesquicentennial, 1994

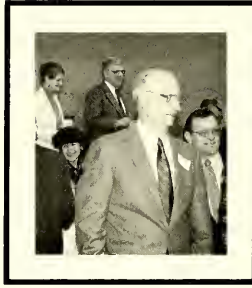


Representatives of Sixty-Plus Group, 1994

Some Representatives of the Continue the Heritage and



Wm. and Wincy Rooker



*Harold Shirley, Joyce
and Fred Ingold, Dixon
Hall*



Louise Griffin



Doris Morgan



Frank & Betsy Griffin



*Wilbert & Carrie
"C.B." Huntley*

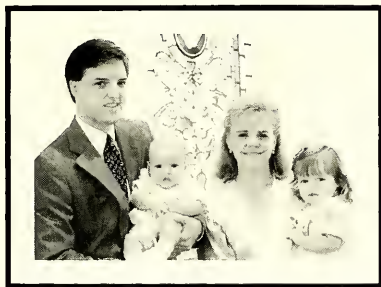


*Blanche Benton
Historian Emeritus*



Julian and Jo Bell

Many Lay Persons who Service of Central



Young Families, Jack and Carrie Hargett



Lay persons, Clara Wiggins, Robert McCain, Drake McCain



History Committee: Doris Cornelius, F.B. Lee, Jo Bell, Frances Hunley, Maude Lee, Giles Vick, Vann Secrest, Frances Vick, Jake Plyler, Walt Love, Marge Plyler, Beth Love. Not shown: Virginia Kendrick, Ch., Dan Shive, Ruth Hunley, Helen Winchester



Ruth Hunley, History Committee



*Beth Love
Photographer*



*Girl Scout Brownie Troop
1962*



*Confirmation Class
Mid 1960's*



*Administrative Board
Business Meeting, March, 1994
John Hendley, Chairperson*



*Council on Ministers
Britt Hadley, Chairperson
January, 1994*



*United Methodist Men
Christmas Tree Project, 1991*



Church Brunch



*Sunday School Breakfast
1993*

United Methodist Men



*Graduation Breakfast
1975*



*Girl Scouts
1993*



*1993-1994
Confirmation Class*



Boy Scout Sunday, 1993





*Floral Cross at Easter
Bruce & Emily Scott, Frances Hunley*



*Thanksgiving
Richard & Kitten Moser*



*Christmas Family Night Supper
1992
Marjorie & Marshall,
Jennette & Margaret McNeely*

1993 Christmas Pageant



Our history continues through many past and present faithful



Office Volunteers



*Jim Huntley, Stewardship
Helen Huntley, Artist
(designed rose window)*

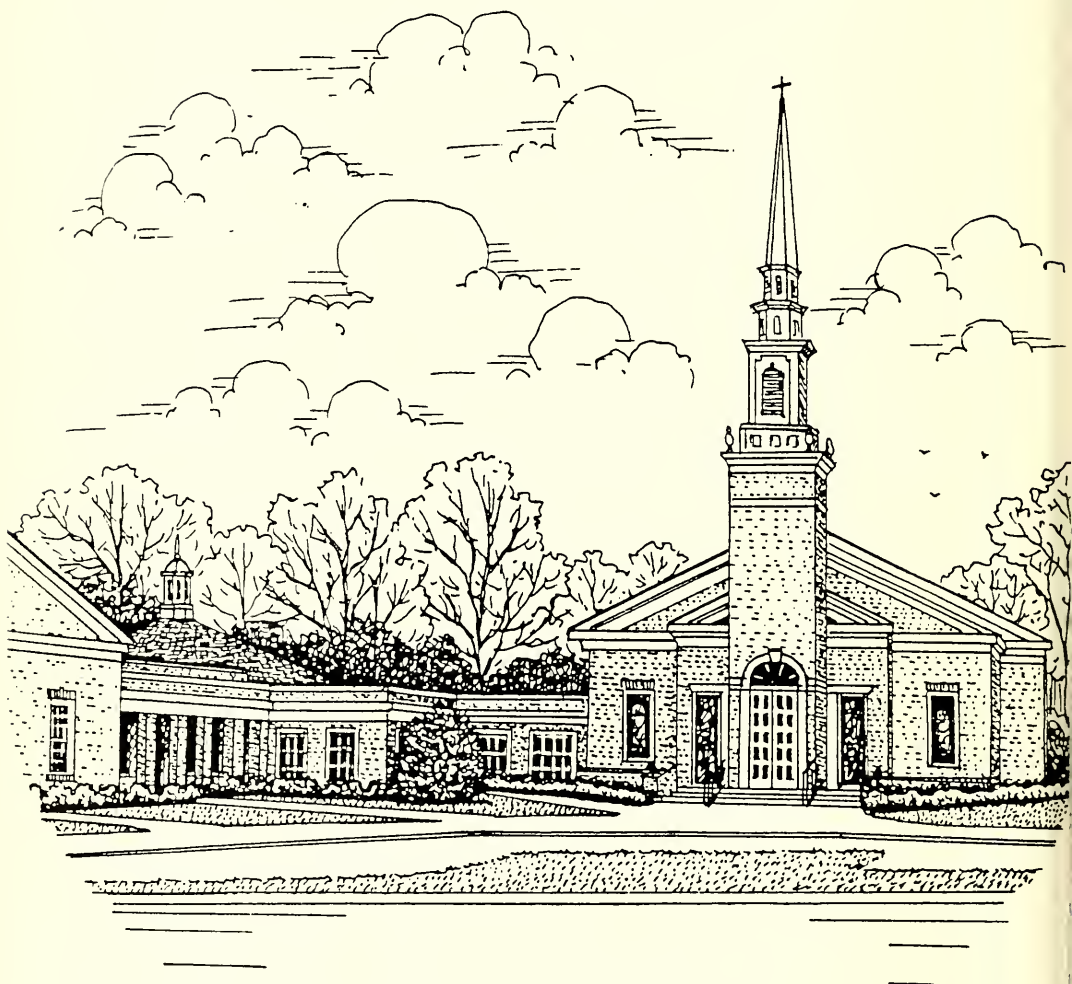


*Helen Winchester (History Committee)
Marguerite Smith (past historian)
Jessie Laney*



*United Methodist Women
Executive Committee
1994*

APPENDICES



CENTRAL METHODIST PREACHERS

The date after each preacher's name is the date of the annual conference at which he/she was appointed.

— Pleasant Grove Circuit —

W.A. McSwain — preached first sermon

Abel Hoyle — Feb. 1844 (died Sept. 8, 1844)

Edward L. King — Dec. 1844

John McMackin — Dec. 1845 (died Aug. 16, 1846)

Willis S. Haltom — Jan. 1847

Hugh E. Ogburn — Feb. 1848

William C. Clark — Dec. 1848

William C. Patterson — Dec. 1849 & Dec. 1850

Lewis Scarborough — Dec. 1851

William C. Patterson — Jan. 1853

William C. Clark — Nov. 1853

William M. Easterling — Nov. 1854

George W. Ivy — Nov. 1855 & Nov. 1856

— Monroe Circuit —

Lewis Scarborough — Nov. 1857

Junior preacher: John W. Abernathy

Minton A. Connelly — Dec. 1858

Junior preacher: Robert W. Burgess

B.G. Jones — Nov. 1859

Junior preacher: John Hutchinson

B.G. Jones — Dec. 1860

Junior preacher: Girard W. DuPre

J.W. Puett — Dec. 1861

Junior preacher: James L. Stoudemire

J.W. Puett — Dec. 1862

Junior preacher: Thomas H. Edwards

W.W. Jones — Dec. 1863 & Dec. 1864

Junior preacher: Evan A. Lemmond

— Monroe Station —

A.J. Stafford — Nov. 1865

John R. Little — Dec. 1866 & Dec. 1867

None appointed — Dec. 1868

W. T. McClellan — Dec. 1869

B.F. Dixon — Dec. 1870 & Nov. 1871

T.P. England — Dec. 1872

M.V. Sherrill — Dec. 1873
 C.M. Pepper — Dec. 1874
 Daniel May — Dec. 1875
 O.J. Brent — Dec. 1876
 J.H. Guinn — Dec. 1877 & Dec. 1878 & Dec. 1879
 P.J. Carraway — Dec. 1880 & Nov. 1881 & Dec. 1882 & Dec. 1883
 F.D. Swindell — Dec. 1884 & Dec. 1885
 W.C. Gannon — Dec. 1886 & Dec. 1887
 A.P. Tyler — Dec. 1888 & Dec. 1889
 J.C. Rowe — Dec. 1890 & Nov. 1891
 W.R. Barnett — Dec. 1892
 R.M. Hoyle — Dec. 1893
 W.R. Ware — Dec. 1894 & Dec. 1895 & Nov. 1896
 J.J. Renn — Nov. 1897
 W.M. Bagby — Nov. 1898 & Nov. 1899 & Nov. 1900 & Nov. 1901
 M.A. Smith — Nov. 1902
 J.C. Rowe — Nov. 1903
 W.R. Ware — Nov. 1904 & Nov. 1905 & Nov. 1906
 H.F. Chreitzberg — Nov. 1907 & Nov. 1908 & Nov. 1909 (died Oct. 10, 1910)
 J. H. Weaver — Nov. 1910 & Nov. 1911 & Nov. 1912 & Dec. 1913
 J.E. Abernathy — Nov. 1914 & Nov. 1915 & Nov. 1916 & Nov. 1917
 H.H. Jordan — Oct. 1918
 John W. Moore — Oct. 1919
 Charles C. Weaver — Oct. 1920 & Oct. 1921 & Oct. 1922 & Oct. 1923
 Henry Grady Hardin — Oct. 1924 & Oct. 1925 & Oct. 1926
 D.H. Wilcox — Oct. 1927
 Ashley Chappell — Oct. 1928 & Oct. 1929 & Nov. 1930
 C.N. Clark — Nov. 1931
 H. C. Sprinkle — Nov. 1932
 A.L. Stanford — Nov. 1933 & Oct. 1934
 W.R. Kelly — Oct. 1935 & Oct. 1936 & Oct. 1937
 G.R. Combs — Oct. 1938 & Oct. 1939 & Oct. 1940
 Joe H. Armbrust — Oct. 1941 & Oct. 1942 & Oct. 1943 & Oct. 1944
 Associate: Joe Caldwell — Oct. 1942 & Oct. 1943
 G.B. Clemmer — Oct. 1945
 Edgar P. Billups — Oct. 1946 & Oct. 1947 & Oct. 1948 & Oct. 1949
 W. Quay Grigg — Sept. 1950 & Sept. 1951
 Abram J. Cox — Sept. 1952 & Sept. 1953 & Sept. 1954 & Sept. 1955
 Lee Spencer — Sept. 1956 & June 1957 & June 1958 & June 1959
 Harley Williams — June 1960 & June 1961 & June 1962 & June 1963 & June 1964
 Melton Harbin — June 1965 & June 1966 & June 1967
 Jacob B. Golden — June 1968 & June 1969 & June 1970 & June 1971
 Associate: Randolph P. Waugh — June 1971 & 1972 & 1973 & 1974 & 1975

Calvin Leonard — June 1972 & June 1973 & June 1974

William Brantley — June 1975 & June 1976 & June 1977 & June 1978

Associate: R. Britton Hadley, Jr — June 1976 & 1977 & 1978 & 1979 & 1980

Thad McDonald — June 1979 & June 1980 & June 1981

Associate: William C. Robinson — June 1981 & 1982

Floyd L. Berrier — June 1982 & June 1983 & June 1984

Donald W. Haynes — Aug. 1984 & June 1985 & June 1986 & June 1987 & June 1988

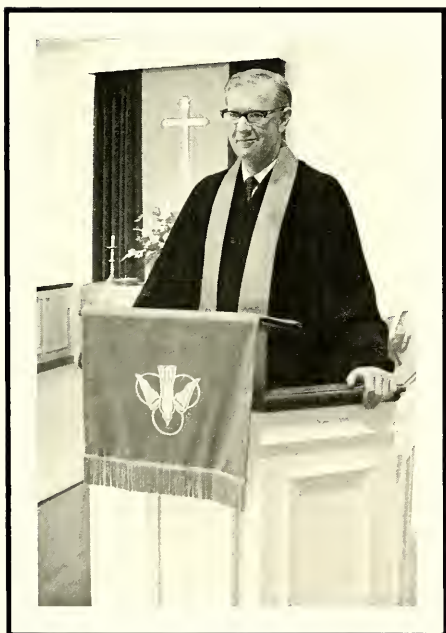
Assistant: Joe Hamby — June 1983 & 1984

Associate: Wayne Allen — June 1985 & 1986 & 1987 & 1988 & 1989 & 1990

Joe M. Reeves — Aug. 1988 & June 1989 & June 1990 & June 1991

Associate: Leslee Lyndon — June 1991 & 1992 & 1993

Robert E. Boggan, Jr. — June 1992 & June 1993



1969 pulpit in Central Hall —
Rev. Jake Golden



1950's — Rev. Abram J. and Hazeline Cox

1871 ROLL OF CHURCH MEMBERS

The spelling may vary from accepted names--you can see various spellings within the same family. The old roll is not in good condition and the handwriting is not easy to read. A middle initial for a woman probably refers to her middle name and not her maiden name.

Male Members:

James E. Irby
James Bickett
T.D. Winchester
H.J. Wolfe
A.F. Stevens
C.L. Helms
A.E. Armfield
J.D. Stewart
G.C. McLarty
J.H. Walsh
H.M. Houston
T.W. Bickett
J.M. McLarty
Christian Cornell
Arch. McLarty
J. Hinson
Arch. Helms
John Holm
R.V. Houston
M.L. Helms
Ger. Helms
William Helms
Charles Laney
Franklin McLarty
William McCaulley
Joseph McClellan
Jason Moser
J.H. Presson
John C. Sikes
J.C. Steele
J.H. Sossamon
J.R. Shute
Charles Trull
John R. Winchester
W.C. Wolfe
J.E. Stack
W.W. Walsh
Franklin Winchester
J.C. Blakeney
B.G. Helms
Adam Helms
Spencer Walsh
L.A.W. Turner
F.H. Wolfe

C.M. Broome

D. McGuirt
L.R. Helms
J.M. McClellan
J.J. Lockhart
Francis Trull

Female Members:

Frances E. Austin
M.A. Acock
M.A. Abernathy
Rachel A. Armfield
Elis. Bickett
Hannah Blount
Permelia Bowen
Ellen Broome
Lydia A. Coon
Nancy J. Chaney
Nancy S. Dillon
Mary E. Doster
Ellen E. Fitzgerald
Susan Hayden
Frances A. Helms
Nancy Helms
Jane D. Helms
Ellen C. Helms
Mary E. Helms
Frances Helms
Rebecca Helms
Mary E. Helms
Mary J. Helms
Polly Hinson
Margaret Houston
Amanda Howard
Pocahuntas Hinson
Isabella Irby
Elis. E. Irby
Arkansas Irby
Ellen Irby
Mary Laney
Fetna D. Little
Virginia Lee
Sarah J. Moser
J.J. Marsh
E.E. McCaulley

Ellen B. McLarty
Laura McLarty
Sarah McLarty
Mary McLarty
Kersida McClellan
Hessie McClellan
Rebecca Osborn
Nancy Osborne
Amanda Osborne
Hattie Osborne
P.A. Presslar
Alice Pistole
Permelia Rose
M.R. Robinson
Lydia A. Stewart
Mary J. Sossamon
Martha E. Stevens
R.B. Tabscott
M.M. Turner
Elis. Tomberlin
B.A. Winchester
Elis. J. Winchester
Julia Winchester
C.E. Wolfe
Ida Wyatt
Delilah Yandell
Sarah J. Walsh
M.F. Black
Elis. Greening
Laura A. Walsh
M.J. Presson
Emma McCaulley
Frances Helms
Lucinda McLaughlin
L.C. Hayden
M.E. Blakney
C.L. Blakney
J.C. Wolfe
Mary Stevens
M.A. Stevens
M.D. Tomberlin
Clemmie Correll
C.A. Helms
Elisabeth Stewart

TRIBUTE OF RESPECT

The following report of the committee appointed at the 3rd Quarterly Conference of 1895 resolutions touching upon the death of Bro. T. D. Winchester was read and adopted:

Though the hand of God moves in a mysterious manner, his righteous purposes to accomplish, yet every dispensation of His Providence in love and mercy comes. What may seem to us a curse, may the richest blessing prove. The sweetest joys spring from the bitterest griefs. "How inscrutable are thy ways Oh God!"

He gathers his jewels as it may seem best to his infinite wisdom and goodness. He takes in the tenderest compassion the innocent babe from its Mother's breast — or he may waste the strength of manhood by some insidious and lingering disease and the curtain drops and the man is gone — or in an instant at his will the Wheel is broken at the Cistern and the spirit is gone to its long home, and the body is a lifeless form of clay. Thus came the summons to our beloved brother T. D. Winchester. He had long been a disciple of the lowly Savior, a consistent and devoted member of the M. E. Church South, as an official of the church he was faithful and true. On the Lord's day, after divine service and while the Sabbath School was in session, in an instant of time the Summons came and, as we believe, the pearly gates were opened and he entered the realms of eternal bliss. Let us therefore as individuals and as a Conference,

Resolved first — to bow in meek submission to every dispensation of Divine Providence and to kiss the rod (sic) that seems to afflict and to be ready at any moment to enter the portals of death — believing that all things will work together for our good if we love the Lord.

Resolved second — that in the death of Brother T. D. Winchester the Church loses one of its most consistent members, the Official Board of Monroe Station one of its most efficient and useful members and the town of Monroe one of its most worthy citizens, but while we lament his death, his example and influence still lives.

Resolved third — That we mingle our tears and unite our prayers with his grief stricken wife and children and pray the blessing of heaven upon them that they and we may meet again in the better world.

Resolved fourth — That these resolutions be spread upon the Minutes of this Conference and accordingly be sent to the bereaved family and to the local papers and to the N. C. Christian Advocate.

Committee: W. H. Phifer, L. D. Andrews, W. R. Ware

REVEREND WARE'S PASTORAL LETTER

We are fortunate to have a booklet published in 1907 by Central's pastor, the Reverend W.R. Ware. It is named "Historical Sketch and Directory" and contains a Pastoral Letter, as follows:

The relation of pastor and people is close and intimate. Their interests are mutual. He is called into his high and sacred vocation by the great Shepherd of the sheep; they are the flock committed to his keeping. In the manifold experiences of life the pastor is called on to share with his people. He rejoices with them that rejoice, and weeps with them that weep. The marriage bell has a clearer, sweeter tone because of his presence, the funeral knell is softer if the man of God is there with promises and hope for the troubled and bereaved. He stands at the baptismal font and takes the children in his arms and blesses them; and with open hands and a glad heart he stands at the altar of the church to receive the young and the old into the fold of God. When the afflictive providences of God are visited upon the people, the pastor is looked to for words of comfort and encouragement, and in times of health and prosperity he is welcomed to share in the blessings that are theirs. The mother advises with him about her wayward boy, the wife desires his prayers for her unsaved husband. The young people come to him with their love affairs, and parents pour their tale of woe and disappointments into his ears. In one home he finds tears and breaking hearts, at the next door there is mirth and joy and festivity. He enters some homes and the very atmosphere is religious and every breath is devotion to God, there are others where worldliness reigns and it is difficult to get in a word for his Master. O, the manifold phases of life with which he meets, and the multiplied conditions he must be prepared to minister to!

When the congregations assemble to worship, the cynical and the devout are before him, the saint and the sinner, the prayerful sympathizer and the carping critic. The indifferent and the inattentive are there, also those who hang on every word he utters. He has before him men who have fought through temptations and trials and need the strong meat of the gospel; he also has in the same congregation babes in Christ, who must be fed with the sincere milk of the word.

Your pastor has to deal with the refractory and the sensitive, the rich and the poor, the refined and the coarse — all classes and grades of people. He needs wisdom and grace; your prayers and patient forbearance and help. Let us stand together in loyal co-operation, and each, pastor and congregation, try at all times by the blessing of God to do our best. The best that is in me you shall have. Will you stand close by my side, hold up my hands, and remember me daily at a throne of grace?

" 'Tis not a cause of small import
The pastor's care demands;
But what might fill an angel's heart,
And filled a Saviour's hands."

Faithfully and affectionately,
Your pastor,
W.R. Ware.

CENTRAL'S VETERANS

We have not attempted to compile a list of veterans from our church that served in the War Between the States, partly because we were Monroe Circuit until after the war but mostly because no church roll is available that early. Nor do we have a list for the Spanish-American War. We have concentrated on twentieth century wars and only those who were MEMBERS of Central at the time they were in service.

The names we have for World War I are:

Charles W. Bundy, Arthur Edgeworth, Henry L. Hinson, William Pemberton Hinson, Sr., Rober L. Payne, Vann V. Secrest, Sr.

The list for World War II is complete, we believe, thanks to the efforts of the Reverend Joe H. Armbrust. When the list for the plaque was compiled, it was in alphabetical order for the first year or so of the war. After that the names were in the order that they went into service. The plaque was given by the J. R. Shute family and now hangs in the hall of the education building. The plaque says at the top "soldiers", though of course it meant service men and women. They are as follows:

Tom Lewis Ashcraft
Edward H. Austin
Edmund Blair Bivens
William Ballentine
George Ballentine
Garland Ballentine
Harold Broom
Lonnie R. Broom
Wm. Ellsworth Brunson
*Linwood Brooks
William Donald Coan
J. Neal Clark
*James Copeland
Louie H. Couch, Jr.
Fred Carter
Charles R. Carter
Marion Carter
Marvin C. Cannup
Wiley G. Coleman
J. Henry Doster
Thomas Jack Fowler
Thomas Laney Gordon
Robert Earnest Heath, Jr.
Walter Andrews Heath

Phifer Laney
*James Warren Lemmond
Harry Lee
Ray Lemmond
Frank Lander, Jr.
Ray Malone
Bobby Menius
Hinkle McLendon, Jr.
*James Morgan
*Henry H. Milton
Ney McNeely
Henry H. Maynor
Samuel Everett Montgomery, Sr.
Edwin Niven, Jr.
Charles G. Napier
Robert H. Payne
Rober L. Payne, Jr.
James C. Plyler
Pete Plyler
Ernest C. Plyler
Lawrence Presson, Jr.
Jeff Sewell
Frank Stearns
George Stearns

Brice Howie
Sam Hudson, Jr.
Augustus M. Horton
Heath Howie
James. D. H. Helms
Paul Hayne Johnson, Jr.
Harold Lander
George Laney

Lindley J. Nabholtz
Lloyd Laverty
Marion Holloway
Roy Fondern
Henry D. Fowler, Jr.
John Bulla Ashcraft
Dale Barksdale Bundy
Warren C. Stack
Floyd Norman Tankersley
Richard Schoonover
Jack Cole Blakeney
John Tappan Copeland
Theodore C. Horton, Jr.
Hugh McColl Johnson
Neill G. Huggins
Miss Margaret Louise Roberts
John R. English, Jr.
Benjamin E. Steele
Fred Eugene Brunson
Robert Caston Hunter
Emsley Armfield, Jr.
Abram Hill Crowell
James Worth Penegar
James Edward Doster
Millard Condry
George Hovey
C. C. Phillips
*John D. Futch, Jr.
Frank Laney
Bill McConnell Lee
David V. Pitts
Harry Monroe Ballentine
Dewey Lee Belk
Jesse B. Slagle
Joel Richard Howie
Robert Bruce Fowler
Walter Clifford Crowell

Junius Stearns, Jr.
Francis A. Stewart
Motte G. Sheppard, Jr.
Jack Scott
Carl David Secrest
E. C. Wier
Charles Winchester, Jr.
Houston Winchester

Robert S. Houston, Jr.
*Ray Little Lingle
Jack Lewis Lemmond
Jacob C. Brooks, Jr.
Charles W. Pressley
Phillip S. Gravely
William H. Price
Andrew McDowd Secrest, Jr.
Vann V. Secrest, Jr.
James R. Lingle
Charles E. Haigler
Clayton Smith, Jr.
William P. Hinson, Jr.
Ted Morgan
Daniel Cadieu, Jr.
John Plyler
Edgar H. Slagle
Marvin McNeely
Robert McNeely
Kenneth McNeely
Walter Craig Lee
Robert English
Marion Shelor Gravely
David Lewis Capehart
John Dunham Bundy, Jr.
William Martin Gibson, Jr.
Archie Harold Winchester
John Donnom Stewart
Paul Reginald Flow, Jr.
John Burns Simpson, Jr.
Robert Neal Laney
*Thomas Percy Laney
Theodore Leslie Futch
William Weaver Presson
*William Marsh Hill
Franklin Marsh Parker
James Crawford Ashcraft

Robert Everett Helms, Jr.
 Max Frank Harris
 Erskine Tuttle
 Robert Purdy
 Jesse Edward Glasgow
 Vann Howard Parker
 Walter B. Love, Jr.
 Everett Earl Jones
 Dewey Reece Winchester
 Miss Roxy Winchester
 *Carl Leap
 Arthur Niven Price
 John W. Menius, Jr.
 Herbert Hatton

James Franklin Holloway
 John H. Williams
 David Franklin Morgan
 Gene Frank Plyler
 Jack L. Hernig
 Robert Parker
 O. Max Gordon
 Raymond Gordon, Jr.
 Walter Lester Hemby, Jr.
 Samuel Stevens Howie, Jr.
 Glenn Richardson Wolfe
 William C. Clark
 Curtis Aaron Poarch
 Robert Lee Kenney

Francis B. Lee
 Watson Stearnes
 Brice Nebraska Williams
 David Joseph Gordon
 Julian Crouse Powell
 Ellison H. Bivens
 Donald Brandon Harris
 Craven Gordon, Jr.
 Robert Stevens Couch
 Boyd Trull
 James Hazel Belk
 Vaughn Lemmond
 Charles Sturgis
 Marvin Huntley

William Charles Austin, Jr.
 Richard Lovell Edgeworth
 John H. Richardson, Jr.
 James Henry Lee
 Miss Bettie Turner Sturgis
 Everette Archer Beamer
 Charles William Burns Beaver
 Mack Quinton Beaver
 John Raymond Shute, III
 William Houston Phifer
 James Ray Parker
 Harry Gillen Doster
 Henry Frank Peninger
 Neil Davis Trull

*The ten gold stars on the plaque identify the ten men who lost their lives in the service of their country during World War II. Brief biographical sketches appear in Chapter 10.

Serving in the armed forces between June 27, 1950 and January 31, 1955 during the Korean Conflict were:

John Rea Alexander
 Samuel A. Alexander, Jr.
 Billy Ray Belk
 William Dexter Benton
 Ted O. Broome
 Howard Lee Burdette, Jr.
 Joe L. Gaddy
 Thomas Laney Gordon
 Henry Hunter Howie

James Robert Howie
 Caston Hunter
 Walter B. Love, Jr.
 Vann Parker
 Dr. William H. Phifer
 Dr. William H. Price
 Samuel Joseph Richardson
 George Marvin Smith, Jr.

Serving in the armed forces between August 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975 during the Southeast Asia/Vietnam Conflict were:

*Phillip Ward Broom
Seth Boyd Davis
David L. Dixon
David Gordon, Jr.

Thomas Laney Gordon
Roger Lane
Billy Frank Norwood

*Phillip Ward Broom, the son of Ward L. and Mary Price Broom, was born November 14, 1930, in Monroe, NC, and reared in Central Church. After graduating from Monroe High School, he earned a degree in Mechanical Engineering from Duke University and a Master's degree in Aeronautical Engineering from the University of Washington. In 1960 he married Miss Phylis Dean of King's Mountain, NC. They had two sons, Phillip W. Broom, Jr. and Thomas Franklin Broom. Major Broom, a fighter pilot in the United States Air Force, was shot down by ground fire and killed in Vietnam on November 3, 1967. A memorial service was held at Central Methodist on November 9. He was survived by his wife and sons, his parents, and a sister, Elsie Broom Lee.



1943 Young People's Fellowship

SYMBOLS IN OUR CHURCH

The symbolism in our present church is concentrated in the chapel and the sanctuary area. As you enter the sanctuary (or nave) from the narthex, the focal point is the circular window above the pulpit/choir loft. It was designed by Helen Huntley and was a gift from her and her husband, James R. Huntley. Reading from the inside out, the clear jewel in the center represents the one God we worship. The twelve points represent the twelve disciples. The dogwood bracts form a cross with reddish-brown marking to remind us of the Crucifixion. The lily represents the Resurrection, probably based on the emergence of the flower from the seemingly dead bulb. The wreath of grapes remind us of Holy Communion. The daisy is a flower of simplicity and the innocence of the Christ Child; each petal reminds us of the Beatitudes.

The altar table has a brass Latin cross and a pair of matching candlesticks. The candle is a symbol for Jesus Christ, remembering His words, "I am the light of the world." The two candles remind Christians that Jesus was a man, but at the same time God was with Him in a special way. The cross is empty, reminding us of the Resurrection. The Latin cross is the best known because it was the kind of cross on which Christ was crucified. There are more than fifty forms of the cross used in Christian art.

Within the pulpit area is a carved marble baptismal font, given to the church about seventy years ago. It resembles a basket set in a circle of Easter lilies.

There are twelve stained glass windows in the sanctuary. Taken together, they are designed to communicate a story — God's story of His seeking love and victory, and His call for us to share that story. We will consider them clockwise, beginning to the right of the pulpit (west side). The first window has a boat and a rainbow, based on the Old Testament story of Noah and the ark. The rainbow is a reminder of God's covenant with His people.

The next window, containing a manger, staff, and star, reminds us of the birth of Jesus. The manger has swaddling clothes to distinguish it from a manger containing food for cattle. The Epiphany Star, with its five points, led the visitors to the baby Jesus' birthplace. The staff represents the shepherds who found the Holy Family in the stable.

The baptismal font in the third window represents the baptism of Jesus as a dove descends upon him (as the Holy Spirit). The dove is pointing downward, symbolizing that God comes to us. Baptism

marks the origin of a new faith.

The open book in the fourth window is the Bible — God wants us to read His word and guides us in our understanding. The lamp is a lamp of learning — “Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

The anchor cross is in the fifth window; hope is “a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul.” The anchor also reminds us of boats and fishermen, identified with several of the disciples. Other than the Latin cross, the anchor cross is the oldest design. It was meant to hide its true identity from all but Christian eyes.

Another Bible is pictured in the sixth window; this one is closed with four bookmarks representing the four Gospels. On top of the book is a lamp to indicate learning — we should study the Bible.

On the east side of the sanctuary, starting from the back, the next (seventh) window reminds us of the bread and wine of Holy Communion. The bread, as wheat then as a loaf of bread, stands for the body of Christ. The blood of Christ is the wine — made from grapes and drunk from the chalice.

Window number eight shows a draped Latin cross. The three lilies represent the Trinity.

The lamb in the ninth window represents Christ, the sacrificial lamb, with a halo around His head. The banner containing a cross symbol stands for victory and triumph.

The tenth window, with a cross on top of a globe, means that the gospel has been preached all over the world. Christianity has spread from Palestine over all the world. This window may also be interpreted as showing a scepter, the sign of sovereignty.

“Go ye into all the world” is the theme of the eleventh window. It shows a globe with a boat on top. The sail of the boat has a cross, indicating Christian travels.

There is a purple Latin cross in the twelfth window with a cross crown around it. Purple is the royal color. This window may suggest power, dominion, authority — our final loyalty is to Jesus Christ.

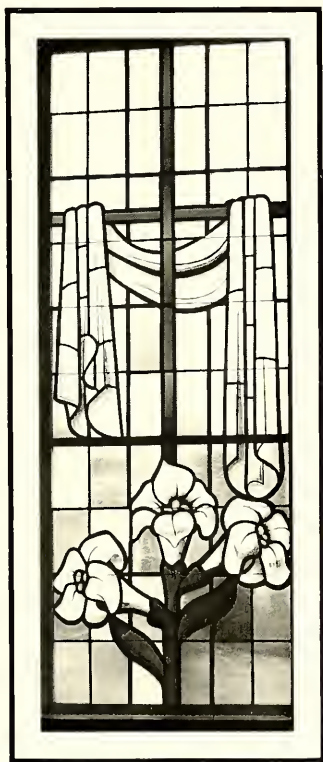
Leaving the sanctuary and entering the narthex, there are seven windows preserved from the 1902 church; four are in the narthex and three are in the hallway leading to the other part of the church building. On either side of the main front door there are matching windows from the old church with Easter lilies in the center. Toward the west door is a window with the anchor cross. On the other side of the main door, and the pair of windows, is a window symbolizing the Ten Commandments; pictured as tablets of stone with Roman numerals, it represents God’s will for our lives. In the hallway is a window with a crown of fleur-de-lis; the fleur-de-lis is a stylized iris and has three parts, representing the Trinity. The middle window has Christ as the Good Shepherd (with His staff) knocking on the closed door. The door has no way to open from outside; it implies that when He calls us, we must initiate the answer. The last window has a beehive, signify-

ing the community of believers working together with one purpose.

The colonial chapel is a lovely small round building, its circular shape representing Eternity (no beginning and no end). The outline of the ceiling makes the shape of a Maltese cross. In the center of the ceiling is a brass chandelier set in a large medallion containing the following Christian symbols: Christmas rose, lily, dogwood, fleur-de-lis, and sand dollar.

The Greek key is repeated as a decoration on the pews and altar table. The end of each pew has a blunted cross with four letters which stand for Christ's name in Latin. The front of the altar table has a carving of a chalice with letters for Christ's name radiating with rays of light. On either side of the chalice are the symbols for bread and wine, stalks of wheat and grapes with vine and leaves.

Above and behind the pulpit are three carvings with scripture readings. The one on the left has a Maltese cross, and the quotation is from Habakkuk 2:4 — "The righteous shall live by his faith." The middle carving shows an anchor cross; the scripture reference is Hebrews 6:19 — "Hope we have as an anchor of the soul." On the right a heart is with a quotation from I John 4:16 — "He who dwelleth in love dwelleth in God." All of the scriptures are from the King James Version of the Bible.



Officers and Committees of Central United Methodist Church 1994

Board of Stewards John Hendley, Chairperson

1994	1995	1996
Wincy Rooker	Sandra Glenn	John Burns
Dr. William Price	Charlie Sturgis	Ron Brown
Joe Ferguson	Vann Davis	Nicki Bivens
Harold Shirley	Marvin Morris	Cleone Gordon
Kermit Starnes	Beth Hargett	Matt Gustafson
Tom Batchelor, Jr.	Frank Howey, Jr.	B'easy Helms
Tripp Niven	Russ Asti	Frances Hunley
Earl Poplin	Carolyn Biggers	George Morgan
Donna Laney	Bonnie Whitley	Jim Parker
Frank Helms	Kevin Neal	Rogers Tice
Clara Wiggins	Jim Belk	Sara Waldrip
Howard Dehner	Richard Huntley	
Maxine Wally	Karen Schweiker	
Dot Shive		

Council on Ministries Britt Hadley, Chairperson

Church, Work Area on – Stewardship	Jim Plyler
Church, Work Area on – Evangelism	Earl & Hilda Poplin
Church, Work Area on – Worship	Drake McCain
Church, Work Area on – Religion and Race	Janet Parks
Church, Work Area on – Church and Society	Amy Parker
Health and Welfare Representative	Irene Ward
Church, Work Area on – Christian unity and Interreligious Concerns	Andrew Arruza
Church, Work Area on – Missions	Dean Davidson
Church, Work Area on – Status and Role of Women	Rena McGee-Helms
Church, Work Area on – Education	Win Baker
Worship Committee Member-at-Large	Margarette McManus
Communion Stewards	Myrna Hilton, Ann Ober, Louise Stallings, Loretta Huntley
Stewardship Assistant	Gene Ellinger
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Helen Winchester, past chairperson

Education Committee

(In addition to the Chairperson of Education, the Youth Representatives, and the Christian Educator (who are all members of the COM), the following positions complete the Education Committee. These additional members are welcome, but not required to attend COM meetings.)

Sunday School Superintendent	Linda Deese
Sunday School Secretary	Dallas Rollins
Children's Ministries Coordinator	Emily McCall
Coordinator of Pre-School Sunday School	Carrie Hargett
Coordinator of Elementary Sunday School	Stephanie Leach
Coordinator of Worship Nurseries	Caroline Brown
Coordinator of Children's Church	Beth Tice
Youth Ministries Coordinator	Janice & Max Clark
Coordinator of Adult Ministries	Dixon Hall
Coordinator of Young Adult Ministries	Sandi & Ed Mills
Director of Older Adult Ministries	Helen Hancock
Coordinator of Singles Ministries	Joyce Laney
Coordinator of Family Ministries	John & Karen Walters, Bruce & Emily Scott
Coordinator of Wednesday Suppers	Kitten & Richard Moser



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